

*The Game of Diplomacy*



*THE GAME OF DIPLOMACY.*



THE CZAR AND HIS FAMILY.

# *The Game of Diplomacy*

*By a European Diplomat*

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## BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Mr. E. de Schelking was born in Petrograd in 1858. His family, which belonged to the ancient order of Teutonic knights, migrated into Courland from Austria, and there became Polish subjects receiving the title of Baron from the King of Poland, Sigismund III. When Courland, under Empress Anne, Duchess of Courland, became a Russian province during the latter half of the eighteenth century, Mr. de Schelking's family went to Petrograd, retaining the title of Baron in Courland but not taking out the necessary papers to make the barony Russian.

His father was a Russian General—Nicholas George Schelking—who distinguished himself in the Hungarian Campaign of 1848 and in that of Poland in 1864. His mother was a Baroness Fersen, and one of her ancestors accompanied Louis XVI. of France and Queen Marie Antoinette in their flight from Varennes.

Mr. de Schelking finished his studies in the Imperial College of Law at Petrograd and entered the Diplomatic Service of his country in 1883, and has held the following Diplomatic Posts :

First Secretary in Greece, France, Spain and Germany—both in Berlin and Munich—and he was for a time Legation Councillor at The Hague.

Leaving diplomatic life in 1903 he went into political journalism, and was correspondent in Paris for the well known Liberal Organ—the *Rouss*, and later for the *Novoie Vremya*.

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After that again he was for six years in the Foreign Politics Department of the *Birjevia Wiedemosti*—the largest of all the papers in the Russian capital. While in this position he was officially asked on several occasions to undertake delicate missions for his government, and in consequence, travelled a great deal in Europe, but more especially in the Balkans. For a time he was the Petrograd Correspondent for the Paris newspaper—*Le Temps*.

During his actual diplomatic career, Mr. de Schelking spent fourteen years in Germany, with Count Osten-Sacken as his Chief.

During the last four or five years, Mr. de Schelking has been a member of practically all the Slavic Societies in Russia, and also a Member of their Councils. He was especially popular in the Slavophilist circles, and the representatives of the Czech peoples in Russia honoured him with an Address of Thanks for the work that he did toward the liberation of the Czechs from the oppression of Austria.

## NOTE BY THE AUTHOR

It is difficult to relate with any degree of clearness those events which culminated in the Russian Revolution and the great tragedy of the European War. Hundreds of books have been written about the policies of the various governments involved. History has dealt with Germany, Russia, France, Italy and the Balkan Powers and with their relations to the British Empire. Many of these books have been written by men intimately connected with the governments of what has been known as Continental Europe. They have dealt with the dangers of militarism and from another point of view, with the so-called danger of British sea power. To the student of history, these books have been admired but nevertheless they utterly failed to convince the world of the inexorable outcome of these policies.

The tragedy of the European War has been ascribed to many different causes. It is, of course, the natural outcome of policies deliberately pursued, but it will be admitted that behind the policy lies the personality of the men in whose hands have lain the destinies of nations. In the following pages, I have endeavoured to deal with many of these personalities as I knew them, more especially with those men whose personalities guided the destiny of Russia and Germany. Moreover, to thoroughly understand matters that may seem absolutely trivial but which were of themselves much more important than the widely advertised and published treaties with which history deals, it is neces-



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sary to know something of the reign and character of Alexander III., the predecessor of Nicholas II., and of Bavaria's position in the federation of Germany.

I have commenced my book, therefore, with a short chapter reviewing the reign of Alexander III. After his death, Emperor William of Germany became the dominating figure around whom the whirlpool swept. I have given the name of *The Suicide of Monarchies* to this book because it was the feebleness of Nicholas II. which brought disaster to Russia and eliminated the Romanoffs from that throne, just as the insensate, egoistical and dynastic policy of William will inevitably eliminate the Hohenzollerns from among the monarchies of Europe, when the people of Germany realize the rôle he has played in deliberately plotting the tragedy.

The manuscript of this volume was originally dictated by me in French to Mr. Lawrence Mott, correspondent of the New York *Herald* in Yokohama, Japan, where I, after leaving Petrograd nineteen days after the final revolution broke out, stayed for about a year before coming to Canada. The book was practically rewritten in Vancouver, B. C., by me in collaboration with Mr. L. W. Makovski of the Vancouver *Daily Province* whose knowledge of the European situation which led to the war, proved of inestimable value to me, who hereby desire to acknowledge the assistance I received from both Messrs. Mott and Makovski. The latter placed the manuscript in the hands of the publishers.

E. DE SCHELKING.

# The Game of Diplomacy

## CHAPTER I

### ALEXANDER III

Personal life—Politics interior and exterior. Greatness of the Empire beyond its confines

THE Emperor Alexander II. was assassinated on March 13th, 1881. His son, Emperor Alexander III., ascended the throne under most tragic circumstances. Two paths were open to him, Reform or Reaction: Reform would of necessity entail the proclamation of a Constitution: Reaction, suppression of the tendency towards Liberalism encouraged by his father.

General Count Loris Melikov—the all-powerful Minister of the Interior during the last days of the reign of Alexander II.—was credited with being a Liberal. Reaction had as its leader and devoted adherent Monsieur Pobiedonoszeff, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, and as its public exponent Monsieur Katkoff, the famous Moscow journalist.

The Emperor finally decided on Reaction, and persisted in following this path for the fourteen years of his reign.

As I was a young man at the time, and held but minor official positions, I will only touch on a few of the Sovereign's better-known characteristics, which were quite the opposite of those of his successor,

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Nicholas II. I will also endeavour to give a clear idea of his foreign policies, which I was able to obtain from men who were his intimates.

Alexander III. was undoubtedly very popular throughout the nation : among the masses he had the reputation of integrity, loyalty, and firmness. The people felt sure of him and this won him their universal sympathy and understanding. Furthermore, he created for Russia an exceptionally brilliant position beyond the confines of her own domain, which naturally greatly flattered the *amour-propre* of the nation as a whole. Even the turbulent Liberals did not escape this benign influence and popular sentiment, thus making the reign of Alexander III. one of complete political calm. It must be noted, however, that the favouritism and Court intrigue so overwhelmingly present in the last year of the reign of Alexander II. were non-existent during the reign of his son.

Alexander III. had his favourites ; foremost among them were Count Vorontzow-Dachkow, Minister of the Imperial Household, General Tcherevine, Prince W. Obolensky, and the Cheremetievs. But these intimates of the Sovereign had no political influence over him whatsoever. The Emperor dealt exclusively with his Ministers in matters of State and he chose these in person with the greatest of care. The Emperor disliked any changes : for this reason he had but one Minister of Foreign Affairs—Mr. de Giers—whom he inherited from his father ; and only one Minister of War—General Vannowsky, who had been his Chief of Staff during the Turkish Campaign of 1877–78.

In choosing collaborators he did not rely on old family names and traditions. Mr. Pobiedonoszeff, Procurator of the Holy Synod, was the son of a poor country priest ; and Mr. Witte—later created a Count of the Empire—and world-famous at the age of thirty-

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two years—began his official career in the modest position of a station-master. It was not until he was forty-one that the latter's integrity and acumen attracted Imperial notice and he was placed at the head of the Financial Affairs of the Empire. Soon after a political intrigue of doubtful character was started against him and he would have lost both his position and his public prestige if it had not been for the powerful protection and support of the Emperor, who explained his action by stating that he had not only felt sure of his minister but felt certain that at heart he had acted solely and to the best of his ability for the good of his country.

Mr. Witte, after the death of his Imperial master, preserved the greatest loyalty and pious affection for him. In speaking to me of the deceased Sovereign he always referred to him as "My Czar."

But Alexander III. could be severe when he deemed it necessary. If he discovered that the men whom he trusted were not worthy of his confidence and that his trust was misplaced, he rid himself of them forthwith. This happened in the case of the two powerful dignitaries, Prince Lieven, Minister of Domains, and General Kryjanowsky, General Governor of Orenburg. Both were deprived of their positions at a day's notice, the Emperor having personally found out that they were illegitimately trafficking in State lands.

As a husband, Alexander III. was a model; also a generous, kind and considerate father. He married the Princess Dagmar of Denmark (who had previously been the fiancée of his elder brother, who died very suddenly at Nice shortly before his wedding). Everywhere in the salons of Petrograd it was whispered that the young Empress was the first woman the Emperor had ever known intimately, and this was probably quite true, as he was never known to have an intrigue of an amorous character all his life. He surrounded his

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wife with the greatest tenderness and care, but would not permit her to interfere in the slightest way with matters of State. Neither would he allow her to interfere with his personal habits of living, which were rigidly exact and somewhat austere.

I quote an anecdote that was told me on this matter by Count Golenistcheff Kutusoff, Master at the Imperial Court :

The Emperor shared a large double bed with the Empress. Being a man of huge physique he was the exact opposite of the Empress, who was thin and delicate. Owing to his massive weight, the mattress had sunk on his side of the bed and when he was away this made sleeping uncomfortable for the Empress. One day, while he was absent on a tour of inspection in a distant part of Russia, the Empress could stand the discomfort no longer and sent for the Household Minister, Count Kutusoff, and asked to have the mattress changed at once. This was hurriedly done. The Emperor returned late one evening, but when he came to retire for the night discovered the new mattress. Notwithstanding the hour, and the fact that the Empress had already gone to bed, he sent for the Household Minister and ordered him peremptorily to return the discarded bed equipment. "You are to take orders from me personally," said he, "and no one else." Then turning with his delightful smile to the Empress, who was in tears, he said: "Since that is thoroughly understood, Marie, let us now go to bed !"

The Empress was passionately fond of dancing and, although fêtes of all kinds were a nuisance and a bore to the Emperor, the Court held many gay functions of diverse kinds. But, as Alexander III. worked twelve hours out of the twenty-four and was therefore very tired after his day's duties, it was generally the rule that all Court entertainments finished not later than

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2 A.M. Sometimes, however, the Empress, carried away by her enthusiasm for dancing, would forget the hour, and the Emperor then made use of various ways of bringing the function to a close. For instance, on the occasion of a ball at the Peterhof Palace, where the Imperial couple were then in residence, he made use of the following unique method. Having finished his game of cards he signalled the Empress—who was dancing—that it was time to finish, but as she was too engrossed to notice him he quietly told Prince Obolensky, who was his favourite A.D.C., to have the music stop instrument by instrument. Not until only two instruments were left still playing did the Empress leave the floor, and the Emperor laughed uproariously at his bit of fun.

Then the Emperor's tastes were of the simplest kind. At Gatchino, his favourite winter residence—a huge palace built by Emperor Paul I.—Alexander III. only used the smallest of all the Imperial apartments, and the Czarevitch had to be content with three very small rooms. The Dowager Queen of Greece (an ex-Grand Duchess of Russia), of whom the Emperor was extremely fond, told me that once, while visiting the Emperor and Empress there, she expressed the desire to be located somewhere near her Imperial hosts, and was given a cot in the bathroom adjoining the Empress's bedroom !

As I have previously stated, Alexander III. was a model father of a family ; he entered with avidity into the most trivial details that concerned the education of his children. Especially was the Czarevitch his care and the object of his deepest affection and interest.

After having studied very hard as a boy, Nicholas—the Czarevitch—went into the Navy for a course of training, and later into the Army ; but his father permitted him to rise in rank but very slowly, and when Alexander III. died the Czarevitch had only attained the rank of Colonel.



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When Nicholas reached his majority the Emperor sent for the Grand Duke Alexis; the Grand Admiral and a prince notorious for his laxity of morals; to him the Emperor said with the utmost composure and frankness, "Alexis, go find some charming young woman for Nikki. You understand all about these matters. But *on no account* say a word to my wife!" The Grand Duke hastened upon his commission and his choice fell upon a young dancer, Labounskaya by name; Nicholas, however, soon changed her for another artiste—this time from the Imperial Ballet—the now famous Kchessinskaya, whose magnificent residence has but lately been seized by the Maximalists; and who became—after the marriage of Nicholas—the mistress of his uncle, the Grand Duke Sergius.

With regard to the foreign policies of Alexander III., his motto was ever the conservation of the peace of Europe. The Russian people gave him the nickname of "The Pacifist" because of his well-known antipathy to war, and he thoroughly deserved the affectionate title, as he so managed his foreign affairs that not the smallest thing disturbed the diplomatic quiet of his reign.

His relations with Germany, while not so intimate as they had been during the reign of Alexander II., were nevertheless absolutely exact and correct, and the Alliance of the three Emperors was renewed for a term of three years at the Meeting of Skjernevice in 1884. In 1887, however, it was not renewed. The *rapprochement* with France was beginning to be felt which was later consummated under Nicholas II. M. de Giers, Alexander's Minister of Foreign Affairs, had but to take the orders of his master, who knew exactly what he wished done!

The Emperor, though friendly to France, was rather sceptical as to the possibility of a lasting *rapprochement*

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between a Monarchy and a Republic—finding little to justify it. As a fact, the gradual “growing together” of Russia and France was effected without much aid from the Emperor. Two men of obscure birth and of subservient positions played very important parts in the Russo-Franco relationship, namely, M. Ratchkowsky, Chief of the Russian Secret Service abroad, and Mr. de Hansen, a Dane by birth.

Ratchkowsky lived in Paris, and was on most friendly terms with M. Gustave Flourens—then Minister of Foreign Affairs in the French Government, who was, on his side, an intimate friend of the American Ambassador in Paris, Baron de Mohrenheim, ex-Minister to Copenhagen, at which place Alexander III. liked to pass what he called his “vacations.”

In the summer of 1886, on one such vacation, the Emperor, accompanied amongst others by Ratchkowsky, confided to him the extent of his very friendly feelings towards France. Very naturally Ratchkowsky—who was an enthusiast on the subject—hastened, upon his return to Paris, to inform his great friend, M. Flourens, and also Baron de Mohrenheim, about this conversation. The two latter at once set to work to such good purpose that the Emperor consented to visit a French battleship in Copenhagen Harbour, and by this act laid the first stone in the edifice of the future Franco-Russo Alliance. A curious incident related to me by Baron de Mohrenheim is worth recording :

When the official ceremonials for the reception of the Emperor had been concluded, someone in the entourage of Alexander III. suddenly remembered that the French national air had been forgotten ! But the “Marseillaise,” played in the presence of so *decided* an autocrat as Alexander III., seemed an exceedingly tactless thing to attempt. A careful question was asked the Sovereign in words as well chosen as possible.

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"What do you wish me to do about it?" the Emperor laughed. "I am not a sufficiently good musician to write another national air especially for the occasion." In this easy way the matter was settled, and the "Marseillaise" was played, the Emperor standing at salute the while.

Mr. de Hansen had been in Danish diplomatic life for some time, and had earned the illwill of Bismarck, who insisted upon his resignation. Hansen retired, proceeded to Paris, and, becoming a French subject under the name of M. de Hansen, was soon made an Honorary Embassy Councillor at the Quai d'Orsay, and, as he knew the workings of the German Chancellery at Berlin from the bottom upward, became *most* useful to the French Foreign Office. He soon made an intimate friend of Ratchkowsky—became his *alter ego* almost—and through the courtesy of Baron de Mohrenheim sent several memoranda to Copenhagen which the Danish Court did not fail to bring to the attention of the Russian Emperor. These memoranda were much liked by Alexander, the proof being that an annuity of 12,000 roubles was granted to M. de Hansen from the Emperor's privy purse.

At the proclamation of the Russo-Franco Alliance, Nicholas II. did not forget the aged Danish diplomat, and conferred on him the Grand Cordon of the Order of Ste. Anne.

I knew de Hansen very well indeed, and he had a most interesting personality. This was during my stay in Paris during the years 1905-08. Despite his advanced age—he was at least eighty years old then—de Hansen had preserved all his great clearness of mind and lucidity of thought, and worked harder than ever at a new political combination—his dream being an alliance between Russia, France and Germany. His ancient and most mortal enemy, the Iron Chancellor,

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having disappeared from the scene, his hatred of Germany had likewise vanished.

Hansen had great faith in his experience and, further, he did not lack supporters for his ideas, having won over such French statesmen as M. de Constans, Ambassador to Constantinople, and M. Etienne, the Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies. Later, however, the occurrences at Tangier put an end for ever to his hopes, and disappointment was the real cause of his death.

Our *rapprochement* with France notwithstanding, our relations with Germany maintained their correct character until the death of the German Emperor, William I., who, in dying, especially recommended his grandson, William II., to continue these relations as they then existed.

In this connection an interesting incident was told me by a secular witness at the deathbed of the German Emperor. His son, the Emperor to be, Frederick, was away at San Remo and was unable to return in time, so Prince William stood in his father's place at his grandfather's bedside. The aged Emperor had lost his power of vision and spoke earnestly to Prince William, believing he was the Crown Prince Frederick. He said several times, "Fritz, my son, above all things keep on good terms with Russia."

As soon as he had ascended the throne in 1888 William II. began his visits to allied and friendly courts, and came to Petrograd first, notwithstanding the very intimate relations between the Hohenzollern and Habsburg Empires.

At the Russian Court William II. was gushing and almost servile, while Alexander, on the contrary, was cold and very reserved, never overstepping the line of demarcation required by strictly formal etiquette. This was because the young Emperor had ever been

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most decidedly distasteful and antagonistic to him. Admiral Lomen, in charge of the Imperial Pavilion where the meeting of the two Emperors was held, told me of this incident :

When the German Squadron arrived off Cronstadt, William expected to receive the Russian Sovereign on board his yacht ; but Alexander was also on his yacht, and carefully watched the evolutions of the German ships through his glasses. By him on the bridge stood the Grand Duke Alexis, and Admiral Lomen. " Well," said Alexander, turning to the Admiral, " why does he not make a move ? " " He seems to await your Majesty," answered the Admiral. " He will have to wait a long time, then. Alexis, you go over there and bring the little German to *me*." The Emperor's orders were promptly executed, and William II. was forced to acquiesce—although he did so with the worst possible grace and arrived on the Russian Imperial yacht in a regular schoolboy's sulks.

The return visit of the Russian Sovereign to the Court of Berlin was delayed for many months, and Bismarck's pride and *amour-propre* were hurt by this. In revenge, on the very day that Alexander III. reached the German capital, an order was given to suspend all quotations of Russian stocks and bonds on the German Stock Exchange. Hence it was but natural that Alexander was not in the best of humours, despite all the attention and pomp with which William II. surrounded him, and his personally enthusiastic reception of the Russian monarch. But a delicate situation of this kind was an opportunity for Bismarck to show his great diplomatic skill, and in the conversations that ensued he gained every point he wished to make ! Alexander received him at our Embassy in Berlin, and the interview lasted for more than an hour. At the beginning of this interview (so Count Schouvaloff, then our diplomatic repre-

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sentative in Berlin, told me afterwards) matters began very badly. Our Sovereign did not attempt to disguise his ill humour, and broke a silver match-stand between his fingers. But little by little he succumbed to the charm of his famous and clever adversary and when saying "*Au revoir*" to Prince Bismarck he gave him his hand, saying: "You have convinced me and I believe you. But can you guarantee that the Berlin Cabinet will not have a sudden change of heart and that I shall not be left in the dark as to any alterations in conditions?" "Sire," Bismarck answered gravely, "in order that this should come to pass, I should have to be in another world."

At the gala dinner afterwards Alexander lifted his glass to the health of the Chancellor of the German Empire, who beamed with delight, having come off victorious in a delicate and near-dangerous struggle of wits, and also having triumphed over his enemies who accused him of gambling for his own profit with immensely vital political and diplomatic questions which existed between Germany and Russia.

After the fall of Bismarck the two Emperors maintained mutual relations of sentiment and respect, notwithstanding the terror with which Alexander inspired the young German Emperor. The political world of Russia, however, had implicit faith in the well-known pacifist ideals of their monarch and the conviction rapidly gained ground that the Franco-Russian *rapprochement*, far from being a danger to the peace of Europe, would act as a restraint on France should she evince a desire to create dissension.

Our relationship with Great Britain suffered a severe strain in 1885. The Afghans became obstreperous and threatened our frontiers in Central Asia. General Komaroff, who commanded our forces in Turkestan, put them to flight, but in following up his advantage



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he crossed the Afghan frontier and the British Government became greatly excited. An exchange of diplomatic notes followed and the language of the British Foreign Office became more and more abrupt, Lord Salisbury insisting upon the recall of General Komaroff and his discharge from our army. The action of the British Cabinet was supported by a partial mobilization of the fleet, and war was in the air. M. de Giers was in a desperate mental condition of excitement and worry. The aged statesman had taken as his political device that of the Duchess of Offenbach, "*Above all things, no scandal in my Castle.*" Naturally he pleaded for a reconciliation, but having no success with his sovereign, sent him—as his personal representative—Baron de Tominy, First Chancellor in the Foreign Office, and one of his chief aids, a man in whom he had the utmost confidence.

The Baron attempted to fulfil his mission, but after having used all his arguments in vain the aged diplomat brought his message to a close with the words, "Sire, I have grown white in your diplomatic service. It is old age and long experience that speaks from my mouth." This did not displease the Emperor, who answered kindly : "I see indeed that you have greatly aged, my poor Baron." And instead of disavowing the acts of General Komaroff he presented him with a sword of honour ! The meaning of this gift was well understood in London. Steps were immediately taken to avoid the Czar's adroitly pointed challenge, the incident closed, and Russia had won a significant diplomatic victory.

In the Balkans Alexander III. followed the same dignified and firm policy, notwithstanding that these were ever the most dangerous of diplomatic grounds. He, however, caused the fall of Prince Alexander of Bulgaria, because the latter was absolutely deaf to his

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counsels, and would not recognize his successor, Prince Ferdinand, who installed himself in Sofia against his will. His authority in Europe was so great that Germany was forced to resign herself to following out his desires in spite of her alliance with Austro-Hungary, whose candidate for the monarchy of Bulgaria was Prince Ferdinand.

In the spring of 1894 Alexander III. fell ill of influenza, which developed into kidney disease shortly after. The Court physicians insisted that a complete change of climate was necessary and for a time Corfu was considered as the best place—but the Emperor refused to go there. Feeling that he was a dying man, he said that he wished “to die at home,” and the Court moved to the Crimea, as climatic conditions were slightly better there. But the disease gained rapidly, and on November 2nd Alexander III. breathed his last.

Feeling his end approaching, the Emperor Alexander expressed his desire to see his heir married, and, if this was impossible, to know at least that he was engaged. There had already been a question, more than once, of the marriage of Nicholas. One of the daughters of the Duke of Connaught was mentioned; also one of the Princesses of Würtemberg, daughter of Princess Vera (previously a Grand Duchess of Russia and sister of the Dowager Queen of Greece) and, finally, Princess Alice of Hesse-Darmstadt. The Grand Duke of Hesse came to Peterhof three years before the death of Alexander III. with his daughter, Alice, but had no success, as the Dowager knew the secret history of the Hessian Court—in short, she knew the character of the parent of Princess Alice.

The mother of young Princess Alice (Hesse-Darmstadt), the Princess Alice of Great Britain, daughter of Queen Victoria, had died when her daughter was but eleven years of age from the contraction of diphtheria,

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while nursing her son through that illness. She had been a very good woman, but unfortunately had a strong leaning towards mysticism, and this she doubtless had imparted to her daughter—a tendency which was later to be of so grave and tragic a portent in the life of the latter. Count Osten-Sacken told me, after the wedding of Nicholas II. and Princess Alice had been finally decided upon, that he foresaw and prophesied *nothing* good of this union. “Remember, my friend, these words of mine,” he said : “Princess Alice will be the misfortune and unhappiness of Russia.”

Knowing these things, it seems only natural that the Dowager Empress had, in her day, vigorously opposed this union ; but the young Princess had made a strong impression upon Nicholas. Admiral Lomen, who accompanied the Imperial heir (Nicholas) on his voyage to the far east, told me that the photograph of Princess Alice, signed by her, always stood on Nicholas’ bureau beside those of his own family.

Having received orders from his father with regard to his forthcoming wedding, with *carte blanche* as to his own freedom of choice in the matter, Nicholas at once went to see his aunt, the Grand Duchess Marie of Saxe-Coburg, where Princess Alice happened to be staying at the time. Because he was most anxious to have Nicholas marry a German and not a British Princess Emperor William of Germany hurried as fast as he could to Coburg also.

Very timid by nature, Nicholas could not muster up the courage to offer himself to Princess Alice, and it was the German Emperor himself who forced his hand. When the engagement was finally announced formally, the German Emperor, radiant and overjoyed with the success of his hopes and plans, met the British Military Attaché at Darmstadt and said to him : “You may congratulate me ! I am very much pleased ! Nikky

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has at last proposed. But it was hard work to get him to do it, and I had to make him drink a whole bottle of champagne to get up his courage ! ”

Evidently the German monarch had his plans all thought out and rapidly maturing. Knowing the weakness of Nicholas' character, he hoped and fully expected to wield much influence in Russia through the Princess Alice when she became Empress of Russia. Having been of so much help in making the match, he no doubt felt he was entirely able to rely upon the gratitude of Princess Alice.

The Emperor Alexander III. died as he had lived—simply and with great dignity—and transacted matters of State almost to the very last minute of his existence, and signed important documents on the morning of his death. His iron will sustained him unto the end, as it had done all through his life. During the latter part of his illness he also suffered from an ailment that caused his feet to swell, and he could scarcely move about at all. On the day of his arrival in the Crimea the following incident occurred (told me personally by Doctor Hirsch) :

The Czar was slowly getting into his uniform and was found doing so by his favourite physician, Dr. Hirsch, his intention being to meet personally Princess Alice at the station. “Sire,” exclaimed the physician, “what are you thinking of ?” “Let me do as I wish,” answered the Czar ; “I am fulfilling my duty as a father, and do you obey the orders of your Sovereign.”

I was at my post in our Legation at Munich when Alexander III. died ; the impression made in both Austro-Hungary and Germany was profound, and the general opinion, freely expressed, was that the world had lost a firm and just friend, and that Europe had lost its chief advocate for peace.

Nicholas inherited a white page in his country's poli-

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tical history and an exceedingly healthy condition of affairs within his own domains. But, externally, matters did not look so bright. The Habsburg Empire was interfering in the Balkan States and creating a situation of continuous unrest. The Franco-Russian Alliance had but just begun ; and Russo-Germanic relations were somewhat uncertain. At the death of Alexander III., William II. made a great parade of his poignant (?) grief. He hurried in person to our Embassy in Berlin to bear his own condolences and sympathy, and attended the funeral services in the Embassy Chapel. But his intimates very well knew that all this sorrow was cleverly feigned. In his heart of hearts the present German Emperor was delighted to be rid of a load that seriously oppressed him and baulked his pride, which was overweening even in those early days of his career. Furthermore, he was thoroughly aware of the feeble character of Nicholas II., and fervently hoped that he (William II.) might even use his influence over the young Czar to such an extent that it would prove possible to rule Russia from Berlin !

Alexander III. left his son an empire that was all-sufficient to itself within itself, and in excellent condition—also powerful in influence beyond its borders.

In the twenty years of his reign Nicholas II. was to destroy absolutely all that his father had so painstakingly secured and to waste ruthlessly his magnificent heritage.

## CHAPTER II

### BAVARIA AND PRUSSIA AND WILLIAM II

The Regent, King Louis III. A Royal Tragedy. Rôle of Bavaria in the German Empire

IN the spring of 1890 I was appointed second secretary of the Russian Imperial Legation at Munich. I crossed the Russo-German frontier on the same day as newspaper extras announced the fall of Prince Bismarck and the appointment as German Chancellor of Count von Caprivi. Consequently Bavaria was in a turmoil. The young Emperor William was an absolutely unknown quantity, and everyone realized that the Iron Chancellor had been the inspiration and motive power of Germany's prosperity and power. On every hand people spoke with the greatest misgiving of the young Emperor. The Munich cafés were positively humming about him. He was openly dubbed an ingrate and a fool, and Bismarck's name was on every lip.

Personally speaking, the disgrace of the Imperial Chancellor was neither a surprise nor news to me. I had been extremely friendly with the social clique surrounding Countess Rantzau, Bismarck's daughter, and there was much chattering in that clique regarding the dissensions and differences of opinion between her father and the monarch. It had been therefore quite clear to me that these two men, of quite divergent character, although curiously enough they had many

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traits in common, could never really agree on anything. Both of them were autocrats *par excellence*. William II. believed himself—and still believes himself—directly destined by Providence to be the sole guardian not only of Germany but of the whole world. On the other hand, Prince Bismarck, sure of himself and guided by his experience, would tolerate no opposition, considering the German Emperor as a pupil whom it was necessary to teach and to lead, with the help of a switch—like a school-boy. It was reported that the Iron Chancellor sent the Emperor all kinds of state papers for his signature, without even taking the trouble to inform him previously of their contents or consult with him about them.

A short time before my arrival in Munich, Bismarck went to Abazzia, in Austria, to take part in the wedding ceremonies of his son, Count Herbert, with the Countess Hoyos. Count Schouvaloff, the then Russian Ambassador to Berlin, a personal friend of the Iron Chancellor, was to take part in the proceedings as a witness. His position was a very delicate one, for he was, at the same time, a great favourite with the Emperor. He finally decided to take the bull by the horns, and informed the Emperor of his invitation to the wedding, asking him what *he* would do were he in his place. Naturally there was nothing for the Emperor to do but to give his permission, though he did so grudgingly. For his part, the Ambassador did his best to curtail his visit to Abazzia, as, knowing the violence of Bismarck's temper, he feared an outburst. What the Count feared happened. Interviewed at Abazzia by a Viennese journalist, Bismarck told him of his pending resignation, and expressed himself in terms that left nothing to the imagination. Almost every word of the interview was an insult to the dignity of the Sovereign, and the Emperor was furious when it reached him.

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Fortunately Schouvaloff had left Abazzia before the interview took place.

In returning to Germany from Austria, Bismarck passed through Munich, and stopped for a few days with his friend, the well-known Professor Lenbach, the famous Bavarian portrait painter. He was tumultuously greeted. Every day thousands of Bavarians made pilgrimages to Villa Lenbach. The cheers of the vast crowds seemed never to lessen and the Chancellor was forced to appear again and again on the balcony outside his window in order to satisfy the people. He profited by the occasion and made patriotic speeches, carefully avoiding in them any direct reference to the young Emperor. The Prince Regent of Bavaria and all the members of the royal family left Munich the day before Bismarck arrived, wishing to avoid the difficulty of being between such a Scylla and such a Charybdis. But the Prince Regent had slyly given a free hand to the municipal authorities, and thus Bismarck's remarkable reception might well be termed official. He was specially escorted to the Town Hall, and wrote his name in the Golden Book.

I remember well comparing the reception for Bismarck with that given the Emperor by the citizens of Munich on the occasion of his first visit to the Bavarian capital in 1892. Naturally the Prince Regent, surrounded by the royal family, ministers and high dignitaries of the court, were at the station. Troops were posted along the route of the Imperial procession. Eager to see the show, the streets were a solid mass of people, but the cheering was very feeble, and I remember that when William II. left Munich shrill whistlings and catcalls were heard on all sides. It was learned afterwards that when he wrote his name in the Golden Book William added the following: "*Sic volo, sic jubeo.*" The citizens of Munich understood the reference. They



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interpreted it as a direct challenge to their old idol, Bismarck. Moreover, the Emperor was deliberately one hour late for the formal reception tendered him at the Town Hall, and the reason for his tardiness was that he was being photographed in his many uniforms, one after the other. The citizens of Munich at that time felt that their pride, their city, and Bavaria in general had been insulted. But as everything in this world changes, the sentiments of the Bavarians were no exception to the rule, and when socialism made such rapid progress in Prussia, and the Emperor lost much of his popularity, it was in Bavaria especially that he found it again.

During my stay there (1890-1896) the Court was very quiet. The Prince Regent was almost an octogenarian and found no amusement at all in worldly pleasures fêtes, and so forth. He was an enthusiastic sportsman, and despite his great age was always ready to climb the Bavarian mountains after the chamois. To these hunting parties he usually invited men of literary and artistic pursuits, also a few doctors and surgeons who had made themselves famous by their attainments. He always rose at five in the morning, dined at four in the afternoon, and was in bed by 8 P.M. His food was of the simplest, as good cooking meant nothing to him. He was a great connoisseur of paintings, and after having attended to state business always visited the studios of painters and sculptors, and constantly made purchases there. In this way he got together a really fine collection of examples of modern art. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than the offer of some sort of picture, provided of course that it was well executed. Once when the Grand Duke Vladimir of Russia was in Munich the Prince Regent told him of his desire to obtain photographs of three paintings which were at Tsarskoe Selo, near Petrograd, representing

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episodes of the visit of Emperor Nicholas I. of Russia to Munich during the reign of King Louis I. of Bavaria, his father. The Grand Duke mentioned this to Nicholas II., who at once ordered that the three originals be sent to the Prince Regent. I was chosen to convey them to him. The Prince Regent was overjoyed. On my arrival at the station his A.D.C. gave me, in the Prince Regent's name, the Order of the Crown of Bavaria, and an invitation to dine at the royal palace that night. I was requested to be at the palace half an hour before dinner.

I found the Prince Regent studying the three pictures I had brought. "I shall never forget the delicate attention of Emperor Nicholas," he said. "I have telegraphed him my most sincere thanks. But admittedly, you did the talking necessary to obtain them, and that is the reason," he added, in pointing to the decoration which I, of course, was wearing, "that I wished to give you proof of my recognition of your services."

From the political point of view the Prince Regent, contrary to his predecessor, King Louis II., was a fervent supporter of the Imperial federation. But when Berlin attempted to infringe Bavarian rights he knew how to stand up for them.

From a religious point of view, although a strong Catholic, he proved himself extremely tolerant. His Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count von Crailsheim, and his Chief Huntsman, Count Pappenheim, were both Protestants.

At the beginning of the regency the Prince Regent was not popular with the people. They even went so far as to accuse him of having forced the abdication of Ludwig II., who had been the idol of his people. But little by little he gained the affection of the masses by his goodness and his extreme simplicity. Thus when he celebrated his ninetieth birthday he was

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surrounded by the love and friendship of his people. He died at the age of ninety-four, having not only always maintained a simple lucidity and clearness of mind but a powerful and robust body. A year prior to his death he complained bitterly to his friends that while out hunting he had missed a chamois. "My sight is beginning to fail me," he said sadly.

His son, who now reigns in Bavaria, under the title of Ludwig III., only resembles his father in his simplicity of manner. He is a man of very strong character, and very definite in his religious convictions. He once told me that he blessed Heaven every day for being born a Catholic. It is therefore not at all astonishing that he surrounds himself with priests, and became the reverend leader of the Centre Party, or Catholics, in Germany. When he was Crown Prince he always paraded his exclusively Bavarian sentiments. At the coronation of Nicholas II. at Moscow, at which he was present representing his father, he said : "We Bavarians are Allies of Prussia, but *not* her vassals." But when he became Regent, and later King of Bavaria, he even surpassed his father in his cult of Imperialism. He married an Austrian Archduchess, of a Tuscany house. He had fifteen children, of whom eleven are still alive. Not having a large personal fortune, and his father having a very limited Civil List as Regent, he was on short commons as far as money was concerned while he was heir presumptive. His sons were always in need of money. Prince Rupprecht (the eldest), heir to the throne, and the commander of one section of the German front in France during the great war, did not attempt to hide from me that he was very often without twenty marks in his pocket ! The King is extremely amiable, but a despot to his family. He is not popular in Bavaria, but on the other hand he is very high in favour with the Emperor.

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His brother, Prince Leopold, who commands the German troops to-day (January, 1918) in Russia, is married to the Archduchess Gisela of Austria, daughter of the late Emperor Francis Joseph. Since his youth he has been devoted to things military and to a military career. Having obtained the highest rank he became notorious for his extreme cruelty towards his soldiers. When in 1892 the Socialists obtained representation in the Bavarian Chamber of Deputies their first interpellation was regarding the unhappy and wretched conditions prevailing in the Bavarian army. Although the name of Prince Leopold was not mentioned everyone understood who was meant. The Prince Regent also understood perfectly well to whom the Socialists referred, and for some time Prince Leopold had to efface himself. His notoriety as a cruel disciplinarian and a desire to flatter the Bavarians made Emperor William offer him this highly important command in the European conflict.

Of the other Bavarian Princes, Prince Ludwig Ferdinand, who married Infanta Tat of Spain, and whose mother was a Spanish princess, is of some interest. He is of a somewhat original character, and very popular with the masses. He was by profession a male midwife, and every day spent hours taking care of women in child labour in his private hospital. Besides this hobby, he is a fine musician, and a great admirer of Wagner. At Wagnerian Festivals in Munich he is always to be seen playing with the first violins in the orchestra.

Another interesting personality among the Bavarian Princes was the Duke Charles Theodore, father of the present Queen of the Belgians, who was a surgeon oculist, and pupil of the famous Russian oculist, Ivanoff. He personally took care of patients in *his* hospital, assisted by his wife—a very beautiful princess of the House of Braganza of Portugal.

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As is known, the more recent history of Bavaria contains some tragic pages. Two of her kings, Otto I. and Ludwig II., were mad.]

King Otto I. was stricken with the disease to which he later succumbed during the French campaign of '70-71, in which he took part as a lieutenant. Very sensitive and refined, it is said the sight of so much blood, and the horrors of war, caused the loss of reason. When I was in Munich King Otto was shut up in the castle of Furstentrid, a few kilometres from the capital. A small court was attached to his person. Half a squadron of the Light Horse bearing his name were at once his Guard of Honour and his warders. The unhappy Prince had then reached a stage of madness akin to bestiality. During the early stages of the disease he had moments of lucidity. When his brother's death was announced to him, he asked at once for his gala uniform and his decorations, and half opening the door he shouted to the crowd: "It is I who am now your king."

Baron von Redwitz, Grand Master of his court, told me the following episode. Ordinarily the King took his meals alone, but on Saturdays his whole court met at table. The King was a great smoker, and smoked cigarettes all through his meals. One day he was more taciturn and silent than usual, and did not smoke at all. At dessert Baron von Redwitz, accustomed to smoke at the royal table, asked permission of the King to smoke. As the King did not answer he took silence for consent and lighted his cigar. He was considerably upset when the King, addressing himself to the *valet de chambre*, who was standing behind him, exclaimed: "Look at Fritze! That beast smokes in any case." His moments of lucidity, already becoming more and more rare, ceased completely during the last few years of his existence.

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More than once the entourage of the Prince Regent advised him to proclaim the truth regarding King Otto's condition, and in this way put an end to a situation that was so entirely abnormal. The Regent, however, always refused to do anything of the kind. As has been said, he was accused at one time by the people of having forced the abdication of Ludwig II., and he did not wish to bear the burden of another accusation of the same kind. His son, however, was less scrupulous, and accepted the Crown offered to him by the representatives of his people.

King Ludwig II., elder brother of Otto I., and his predecessor on the throne of Bavaria, was really a remarkable sovereign. Unfortunately from his youth upward he was abnormal, and ended his days in a state of absolute madness. He had been nicknamed "The Virgin King," because he had never been known to have an amorous intrigue. Having decided to marry, in order to leave descendants, he became engaged to his cousin, a Bavarian princess, who later married the Duke d'Alençon, and came to such a tragic end in the terrible bazaar fire in Paris. The day before the wedding, when all the invitations to the European Courts had been accepted, Ludwig II. suddenly broke off the wedding, although most of his guests, royal and otherwise, had gathered in Munich, and others were *en route*. He had always avoided the society of women, and the only exception that he ever made was in favour of the Empress Marie of Russia, wife of Alexander II., for whom he entertained a very strong feeling of friendship. The Grand Duke Vladimir, her son, and brother of Alexander III., told me that his mother, having been ill, and staying on the Rhine, was ordered by her doctors to go to Italy for her health. Her journey would take her through Munich. Learning this Ludwig II. begged her to stop over, if only for a few hours. The

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invitation was couched in such fervent terms that she could not decline it. She, however, asked the King to receive her, if possible, in one of his castles, so as to avoid all crowds and ceremonies. The King offered her the Château of Berg, on Lake Starenberg, quite near Munich, where he later ended his days in so terribly tragic a way. Ludwig II. personally attended to the preparations for the Empress, and to her installation there. All the wonders of the Glypthothek (Famous Museum of Sculptors) were scattered about the park surrounding the castle. All the royal furniture itself was taken to the castle—or enough of it to fill all the apartments. The Empress, accompanied by her son, the Grand Duke Vladimir, arrived at the Château of Berg just before dinner. The alley and roads of the park were lighted like a beautiful fairyland. After dinner the King suggested a trip on the lake in a gilded gondola which was specially built from his own design. The entire lake was magnificently illuminated by hundreds of torches, each one held by a peasant in national costume. The peasants were all in boats, and sang their native and national songs. The King desired the Empress to accompany him alone on the gondola, but the Empress, who was afraid, begged the King to permit her son, the Grand Duke, to accompany them. At her departure the King asked the Empress to give him a rose she wore in her dress. Later this rose—all faded and crumpled—was found carefully preserved among his most sacred possessions.

The Bavarian sovereign had always avoided people, and during the last days of his life saw absolutely no one. He was then a maniac, living only by night and going to bed by day. He began his day at sundown. My chief at Munich—Count Osten-Sacken—told me the following details of his first reception by the King. At midnight a gala carriage and an escort of honour

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called for Count Osten-Sacken and the legation personnel in order to take them to the royal palace. Before this Count Perglass, Grand Master of Ceremonies of the Court, had asked my chief, in the King's name, to make his official greeting in German, quite contrary to diplomatic usage, which prescribes the use of the French language for this purpose. The Russian minister refused categorically, saying that he was not sufficiently cognizant with the German language. But Count Perglass tried again, and Count Osten-Sacken perforce had partially to acquiesce. He was determined that the official exchange of courtesies should take place in French, but that he would speak German in any conversation which would naturally follow the precise formal language and allocution. The palace was lighted from top to bottom. The King received the Count in the great Throne Room, surrounded by the high dignitaries of the Crown. All of these His Majesty dismissed as soon as the official part of the presentation was over. In the conversation which followed the monarch showed a surprising knowledge of the political life of Europe. As had been arranged, the conversation was in German. Suddenly the King quoted a French proverb. Count Osten-Sacken at once seized the opportunity, and from that moment French took the place of German in the conversation. Finally the Count asked the King why he had insisted on hearing him massacre the German language, especially as the King spoke French irreproachably. The King smiled and said: "It was not merely a caprice. You see I have not spoken to any one for several years. I was sure I had not forgotten my native language, but I was not so sure of my French."

As a matter of fact the King never even saw his Ministers, who sent in all their reports in writing. He lived entirely alone, and in a most fantastic way. He



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protected Wagner, of whose talent he was a passionate admirer, but to whose work he listened in an absolutely empty and darkened theatre, seated far back in the royal box. He liked to apparel himself in Wagnerian costumes, and, dressed as Lohengrin, had himself towed about in a very small boat by a swan on the lake belonging to one of the castles. It was in this dress that Count Werthern, Minister of Prussia to Bavaria, surprised the King one day, and dragged from him consent to the heredity of the Hohenzollerns to the Imperial throne of Germany—to which he had always been strongly opposed. His carriages were the most fantastic creations. His sleigh, for instance, was gilded, and the cushions were in blue velvet trimmed with ermine. He travelled by night over the mountains accompanied by his body-guard, who carried electric torches.

There has been much gossip regarding his abdication and the last days of his life. I can give an authentic and detailed account of the tragedy, as the events were told me by witnesses all of whom played important parts in the final drama.

Ludwig II. had entirely expended all state moneys in the building of his fairy castles and the financial backing and support of Wagner. His Ministers had not hidden from him the sad state of the Bavarian finances, and finally had to refuse him the credits he asked for. The King, who by this time had completely lost his reason, wrote to Queen Victoria of England, proposing to exchange the crown of Bavaria for a few million pounds sterling and a desert island in some ocean where he could build himself a fantastic castle. This letter of his was intercepted, and as it proved conclusively the mental condition of the unfortunate monarch the members of the royal family and the Ministers of State met in council under the presidency

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of Prince Luitpold, the future Regent of Bavaria, an decided to proclaim to the people the insanity of the King, and their intention of asking him for his abdication, and then to establish a Regency over the Kingdom. Two Ministers, the Counts Crailsheim and Feilitsh, from whom I received all these details, were sent to the King to acquaint him with the decision of the Crown Council. Ludwig II. refused categorically to receive them. He sent them a small bit of paper addressed to the Count Montgelas, leader of his military escort, on which was written in his own handwriting an order to put out the eyes of the two Ministers, and to imprison them in one of the subterranean cells of his castle. Naturally enough his order was not executed, and the two gentlemen reached Munich in safety. But the news of the demand which was made on the King soon spread in the neighbourhood of the royal castle. The King was very popular amongst the Bavarian mountain folk. These latter armed themselves and hastened to the assistance of their beloved King. In Munich every one expected very serious trouble, and the situation became exceedingly difficult. It was then that Dr. Goudden, the head of an Institution of Mental Defectives, offered his services to Prince Luitpold and the Ministers. He promised to obtain from the King everything that was required of him, without resorting to violence or force, and to remove him to one of the palaces near the Capital, in order to get him away from the mountain people—his friends and protectors. The proposition was accepted, and Goudden kept his word.

When he presented himself to the King, despite all his previous orders to the contrary, Louis II. not only received him in a friendly way, but signed his abdication at once and permitted himself to be taken to Berg Castle, on Lake Starnberg, near Munich.

Dr. Goudden took up his residence there also, and

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during the first few days nothing happened. The King seemed to like the doctor's society. At the end of a week, however, the King asked the physician to rid him of the surveillance of the police, who were posted at intervals about the castle and in the parks. These men annoyed him, the King said, on his walks abroad. The doctor was imprudent enough to accede to the King's request, and the next day two bodies—those of the doctor and the King—were pulled out of Lake Starnberg. The inquest determined that a tremendous struggle must have taken place between the two men. The King's chest was badly torn by the doctor's finger nails, and the muscles of the doctor's throat were terribly mangled and torn. But it was proved that the King died of heart failure. After having strangled his victim, Ludwig II. had dragged his body into the lake, probably to hide all traces of his crime. The water being very cold at that time of year—it was the late autumn in 1886—and the King being very stout, and naturally over-excited by the fight he had just finished in so terrible a fashion, his weakened heart could not stand the shock of the icy water.

Ludwig II. lay in state as he had lived. The body was dressed in the picturesque attire of the Knights of St. George, and a rose was placed in his folded hands.

The memory of the King has always remained popular in Bavaria. It is difficult to find even the smallest village that has not erected a monument of some kind to his memory. The masses, as a whole, for one thing, like legends, and the King's life was fantastic ; but more than this, the Bavarian people, not without reason, saw in the person of Ludwig II. a defender of the rights of Bavaria against Prussia, and a heavy curb in the teeth of Hohenzollern ambition.

I was in Bavaria four years after the King's death. The Prince Regent was doing everything he could to

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gain the sympathy of the people, but had singularly failed in doing so despite four years of effort. The ghost of the late King rose between him and the Bavarian people. The old Prince knew this and suffered much because of it.

Bavaria is, after Prussia, the largest state in the German Federation. But the political life of the Empire is almost entirely centred in Berlin. Prussian intrigue has been crowned with success. Count Crailsheim, Bavarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, was merely a docile instrument in the hands of the German Chancellor. Of course the Emperor, William II., has never failed to be extremely polite to the Bavarian Court, and carefully avoids anything which might tend to a misunderstanding, even of the slightest kind. He well knew the susceptibilities of the Bavarian Princes, and has never forgotten the words of Prince Ludwig at Moscow—"Bavaria is an ally of Prussia, but not a vassal."

As may be supposed, the foreign legations at Munich played a very secondary part as far as the politics of the German Empire were concerned. Yet the European chancelleries considered the Bavarian post as one from which excellent observations could be made, and chose men as their representatives there with great care. It thus follows that Munich became a training school for future Ambassadors. For example, of Russian Ministers to Bavaria Count Osten-Sacken and M. Isvolsky became, the former Ambassador at Berlin, and the latter Minister of Foreign Affairs in Russia. The Ministers of France, Comte de Moui, the Marquis de Montebello, and Monsieur Barrere, went from Munich as Ambassadors to Petrograd and Rome. The Minister of Austro-Hungary, Count Doubsky, was made Ambassador to Madrid. The Ministers of Prussia, Prince Eulenberg and Count Pourtales, became Ambassadors at Vienna and Petrograd.

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During my stay of six years in Bavaria (1890–1896) I was able to obtain many definite impressions from which to judge the exact relations between Germany and other European powers. I saw, for instance, that France was eagerly sought after by Germany at that time, and her representatives were treated with exceptional courtesy at Munich as well as at Berlin.

German diplomacy very much feared a *rapprochement* between England and France. As for the French alliance with Russia, the cleverness of our representatives in Germany eliminated any uneasiness. Both Counts Schouvaloff and Osten-Sacken succeeded little by little in instilling into the German foreign office the idea that this alliance served as a check on France in case of a belligerent attitude on her part towards Germany.

The Bavarian aristocracy, being, as a general rule, impoverished, did not receive or entertain much. This was however entirely made up for by her literary and artistic world, which liked festivities very much and entertained accordingly. This artistic and literary world was divided into two camps. The first—and the minority—partisans of the German Emperor, bowed before Prussia; the second, admirers of Bismarck, although fearing Berlin, made believe to ignore it completely. As for the Bavarian peasants, they hated and despised the Prussians. The greatest insult was to call a man “Pig of a Prussian,” and they ever referred to the Germans as “Pigs.” The explanation for this is simple. The Bavarian, in character, is diametrically opposed to the Prussian, for where the Bavarian is simple and as good-natured as a child, the Prussian is proud, overbearing and arrogant. It is therefore natural that an idea gained ground outside of Germany that Prussia might run across an enemy to her political conceptions in Bavaria. This idea is entirely erroneous.

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Imperialism is solidly entrenched in the Bavarian mind, and nothing but an absolute defeat of Prussia will change the Bavarian belief in Prussia, and Prussian power.

In order to make the relationship quite clear, I can make use of a trivial example. Let us suppose that any two people inhabit the same house. They have two separate apartments, but share the same kitchen with but one cook between them. It is obvious that continual quarrels will arise, but if the house were to catch fire both inhabitants would do their utmost to extinguish it. It is thus with Prussia and Bavaria. In 1870-71, during the French campaign, the Bavarians contributed greatly to German victories, winning especially those of Woerth and Bazeilles. In the present great war the Bavarians have defended and attacked the most exposed and dangerous positions, and fought with an *élan* which Prussia itself has not surpassed. If Prussia is finally and completely defeated Bavaria may reassert herself and head a great Roman Catholic federation in Central Europe.

## CHAPTER III

### WILLIAM II

Personal Depressions, his Character, Qualities and Faults, Husband and Father, Kaiser and Politician.

THE EMPEROR WILLIAM is a man of an extremely complex and difficult nature. In the opinion of some people he is a monster in human form—especially since the outbreak of the present war—the war of his making. His admirers, on the other hand, place a halo about him. They regard him as a great Monarch, passionately desiring the best for his people, loyal to his friends, and even most kind and amiable. These two opinions—much exaggerated—are not at all like the real man.

It is necessary to strip William II. of Germany of his position, and power, and regard him merely as a man, to realize his faults and weaknesses, and to give him credit for his good qualities, before it is possible to paint a true portrait of the man who set the world ablaze. I knew him intimately for the six years that I was attached to the Russian Embassy in Berlin, during which time I, of course, had numberless talks with him, many of which were of a confidential nature. Therefore, I shall portray him as I found him, and will try and impress on others the impression he gave me.

Above all traits in his character, impulsiveness is the most apparent. He suffers from it to such an extent that it is a malady. On the impulse of the

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moment, under the influence of his surroundings, he can be as easily led towards good as towards evil. Also—by an adroit use of his mood or of his immediate circumstances it is quite easy to change his whole point of view. Therefore he cannot be called stubborn. The man who wrote in the Golden Book at Munich “*Sic volo, sic jubeo*,” when cleverly flattered and his great *amour-propre* played upon by any one who well knows his peculiarities and character, can be made to change his decisions—often to reverse them completely.

Count Osten-Sacken, the Russian Ambassador of my day, more than any of the Diplomats in Berlin, had the gift of knowing how to talk to him, and also how to influence him greatly. An excellent illustration of this may be given. The Krupp yard at Kiel was going to launch a Russian battleship, and the Emperor William suddenly announced that he would attend the ceremony. Consequently our Ambassador and his suite had to rush off to Kiel. The Emperor arrived in a very bad humour, owing to the fact that the Emperor Nicholas had gone from Petrograd direct to Darmstadt, thus quite pointedly avoiding an interview which William had earnestly sought. Contrary to the latter’s habit, he did not shake hands with the staff of our Embassy—with the exception, of course, of Count Osten-Sacken. He merely greeted the others with a stiff military salute, a very irritated and sombre expression, and a look of great anger in his eyes,—an aspect—which as a pose—he knew very well how to assume. He can always “make up” for his parts, and is an excellent actor. Behold him then making his entrance to the tent reserved for him. After the ceremony he turned to our Ambassador and said he would speak very seriously with him that evening.

That night a dinner was given by his brother, Prince



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Henry of Prussia, Grand Admiral of the German Fleet. Afterwards William lighted a cigar, and invited Count Osten-Sacken to sit beside him. At the same time he beckoned to Chancellor von Buelow to make one of the group. His conversation from the very first was extremely violent in character. The Emperor petulantly complained about the way he was treated by Nicholas II., and said he was not being properly recognized in Russia. "I—who am so well disposed towards you"—he exclaimed. Then he launched into a bitter tirade of our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Muravieff, accusing him of directing a policy that was contrary to the common understanding and relationship between Russia and Germany. Allowing himself to be more and more carried away by his own rage, he went so far as to say that—"the continuation of such policy on Russia's part would most certainly have the most dire results." It was perfectly plain by the things he said, to understand he threatened a definite rupture between us and Germany.

Prince von Buelow was very ill at ease. Count Osten-Sacken, however, maintained his usual sangfroid and dignity; and when William asked him what he had to say, he answered with a smile,—“Very little, Sire. All that you have said to me, you really cannot believe. Still less can you put such threats into execution. After all you have as great a need of us as we have of you. I will even go so far as to say that it is you who need our support the most.” Count Osten-Sacken then reminded him that the great successes of his grandfather—William I.—were due to the intimate relations which that Monarch always maintained with the Russian Empire. He also mentioned the political “will” of the old Sovereign, and the last words regarding Russia William I. uttered on his death-bed. Seeing that the Emperor was gradually

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becoming calmer, Count Osten-Sacken tried to lead the conversation away from the dangerous ground on which the Emperor was treading. He told several historic anecdotes, which always pleased the Emperor, and finally the interview ended in reciprocal joking. William burst into fits of laughter at our Ambassador's stories, and his temper disappeared as mist before the sun! When the party broke up each member of our Embassy was amiably addressed by the Emperor, and he left very much pleased with the entire evening, expressing himself as entirely satisfied with his talk with Count Osten-Sacken.

To relate another such incident—William wished the Reichstag to pass a law increasing the effectives for military duty. The Party of the Right had shown itself recalcitrant towards this measure, and joined itself with the Party of the Extreme Left. The Emperor was furious about it. He considered the members of the Party of the Right—who belonged chiefly to the Prussian aristocracy and were known as “the Junkers,”—as wax between his fingers. He promptly eliminated from the Court list forty of the highest names in the Prussian aristocracy, and wanted to make a speech of a most violent character at the opening of the Reichstag. Prince von Hohenlohe, then Chancellor of the Empire and the Empress' uncle, had done everything he could to dissuade the Emperor from making this speech. Finally William had promised he would confine himself to reading the Imperial Speech, as prepared by the Chancellor. I was present at the opening of the Reichstag. The ceremony was carried through, according to custom, in the White Hall of the Royal Palace in Berlin, as the Emperor never puts his foot in the Reichstag. William ascended the throne, put on his helmet and read the speech. I knew from Prince von Hohenlohe himself what the

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Emperor had promised. Imagine then my stupefaction, and that of those who knew, when William, having taken off his helmet—thus showing that the official opening was ended—began a most violent address to the members! I was far from being the only one present in that crowded hall who was astounded. The short-statured Imperial Chancellor, who was standing on the steps of the throne, turned towards William with an expression of horrified surprise. I learnt later from the lips of Prince von Hohenlohe that, on descending from the throne—the Emperor said to him—“What would you, Uncle Chlodwig, I could not keep it in!”

The most vitally important political and diplomatic decisions were very often determined in the most thoughtless way by the Emperor, owing to a sudden and inexplicable impulse of the moment. The famous telegram to President Kruger in South Africa, and the Expedition to China, which gained Kiao-Tchao for Germany—were both determined by the Emperor personally in this characteristically quick way of his. Owing to the assassination of the German Minister at Peking, the German Government had, of course, to take severe measures, but the German Diplomats had previous to that been planning what was to be done in the Chinese question. Having learned from Admiral Tirpitz, Minister of the Imperial Navy, that in his time Prince Bismarck had dreamt of extensive operations in China, and had actually in 1868 fixed upon Kiao-Tchao as the necessary “jumping off” place, William decided that the moment was most propitious in which to carry out the ideas of the Iron Chancellor. He had no sooner jumped to this conclusion than he sent for Prince Hohenlohe, and ordered him to obtain all the details of the matter. This order was carried out in haste, but at the same time, the Chancellor added

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to the official archives on the subject some suggestion of his own. These were to the effect that he was afraid of serious complications with Russia if Germany undertook any armed intervention in China, because Kiao-Tchao was considered as lying within the zone of Russian influence and protection. The Emperor sent back the hints to Prince Hohenlohe with the laconic notation "Ochsen" (Idiots) written on them in his own red pencil, and within ten minutes sent a personal telegram to Nicholas II., asking him for authority to occupy Kiao-Tchao with a squadron as a coercive measure, as Russia was the only foreign power possessing anchorage and harbour rights for men-of-war in those waters. Nicholas received this message very late that night, and at once sent for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Muravieff, who, casual as usual, and quite unaware of the gravity of the situation and completely ignorant of the Russian agreements with China, told his Imperial Master that we had nothing whatsoever to do with Kiao-Tchao. Nicholas then telegraphed to the German Emperor, as usual in English,—“Unfortunately I can neither authorize you, nor prevent you entering Kiao-Tchao Bay, for I am this moment informed that we have no rights in those waters.” When he received this message, the German Emperor hurriedly sent for Prince von Hohenlohe, triumphantly showed him the message from Nicholas, and telegraphed his order to the German Squadron in Far Eastern waters to seize Kiao-Tchao at once.

Meanwhile in Petrograd the day following his sending of that telegram to William, Nicholas obtained a report on the matter from Admiral Tirhoff, Minister of the Russian Navy, and then showed him his telegraphic correspondence with William. The Admiral was agliahst, for, as a matter of fact, our special rights in

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Kiao-Tchao waters were incontestable owing to the explicit terms of one of our treaties with China. An order was hastily dispatched to Count Osten-Sacken in Berlin to explain to the German Emperor the mistake that had been inadvertently made. Our Ambassador did so, but it was in vain. The German Emperor, highly elated, said to our Ambassador—" I hold Nikky's telegram and I have already given my orders. My Squadron is by now in Kiao-Tchao Bay—it is there and there it shall stay. I cannot make myself ridiculous, and I will not ! " William had won the game, which started entirely on his own initiative and against the advice of the Chancellor, but as is quite evident, he had acted absolutely on the impulse of the moment, without having carefully thought the plan or its possible consequences over.

His telegram to President Kruger was less fortunate, but it had been sent in exactly the same way, and was the result of impulse pure and simple. The message was sent without his asking any advice from his Ministers. The Boers were greatly encouraged, and believed they could obtain support from William, which he was quite unable to give them. Thus both Russian and British relations with Germany were fatally disturbed for a long time by the vanity and impulsiveness of the German Emperor.

His moods were extraordinarily variable, and responded to his immediate surroundings with extreme rapidity. I remember on one occasion he had asked himself to dinner at our Embassy. He had arrived to the minute and in exceedingly good humour. During the meal he told stories, related anecdotes, and lifted his glass to each one of us in turn. Suddenly his A.D.C. brought him a telegram. William became very pale, and addressing Count Osten-Sacken, said :

" I have just received the news of an attempt made

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in Belgium on the life of my Uncle Edward. Fortunately he was not hurt."

(The Emperor's reference to his Uncle Edward meant the late King of England.)

All through the rest of the dinner the Emperor was depressed and very grave, and all the efforts of Count Osten-Sacken to cheer him up were in vain. On leaving the table William asked for a telegraphic form and pen and ink, and dispatched a message to Edward VII.

It was the custom when the Emperor dined at the Embassy to have an entertainment of sorts for him. On this occasion I had advised our Ambassador to invite a Bavarian comedy artist—Dreher by name,—whom the Emperor liked very much. This man, costumed as the Prince of Hell, was awaiting the end of the dinner in one of the Embassy drawing-rooms. Count Osten-Sacken was naturally very much embarrassed by this. William did not seem in any mood to listen to Dreher's jokes. When the Emperor had written his telegram, and lighted his cigar, the Ambassador after some hesitation decided to mention Dreher to him. He said smiling—"Sire, there is an exotic prince here who desires the honour of being presented to you." The Emperor, grave as ever, with his thoughts elsewhere, answered—"It must be a Caucasian Prince! Have him in!" But when Dreher appeared with his fantastic dress and false nose, the Emperor shouted—"Ah, it is my friend Dreher!" As the Bavarian comedian went on with his stories and jokes, many of which were distinctly gross in character—a total transformation took place in the Emperor. His gloom and ill humour vanished, and Edward VII. was completely forgotten!

When he left the Embassy William squeezed my hand heartily and said—"My dear Schelking, I owe

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you especial thanks, for I have learnt that it was at your suggestion that Dreher was on hand, and I have been royally amused ! ”

This is a small matter, no doubt, but it shows the working of William's mind—at one minute deeply distressed by a telegram, and probably wondering how soon his turn would come to be attacked by an assassin, and the next minute cheerfully and enthusiastically enjoying the coarse and even lewd jests of a buffoon—all thought of the more deadly and serious matter completely forgotten !

The following episode is very interesting as it illustrates the instinctive irritation felt by William against England. The Emperor had called one morning on the British Ambassador,—Sir Frank Lascelles, who it is necessary to mention was never up before noon, as he worked very late at night. William called at eleven in the morning and went straight into the bedroom of the Ambassador. The latter woke up and was greatly astonished at seeing the Emperor before him. William started a political conversation which did not at all please Sir Frank Lascelles, who courteously contradicted him on certain points. The Emperor suddenly lost his temper and shouted at the British Ambassador,—“ You will never change my opinion as you are only an Englishman. I am an Englishman plus German. This great advantage which I possess, you can never get by any means.”

The Emperor William talks German with a strong English accent, and corresponds in English rather than in German. All his correspondence with Nicholas II. has been kept up in English.

Like all Prussians, the Emperor at heart is cruel,—one has only to remember for instance his address to the German troops which were sent to China. His personal orders were—“ Pardon wird nicht gegeben ”

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(give no quarter). Yet on other occasions, the Emperor seemed at times to be governed by kindly impulses. For instance, when on one of his daily drives in Berlin, he saw the widow of one of his old Professors at Bonn University,—he got out of his carriage, rushed up to the old lady, and exclaimed excitedly—"You dare to come to Berlin without paying me a visit? By Imperial order you will have luncheon with me to-day at the palace!"

A compatriot of mine, Countess Kleinmichel, who was present at that luncheon, told me that the Emperor paid especial attention to the old lady. He searched his memory for events of his days at Bonn, which he told with great gusto, turning to the Countess and saying:—"If you only knew the good sandwiches she used to give me when I was a student!" To hear the Emperor talk in this way, it was incredible to think that the speaker was the same man who had deliberately given the military such orders regarding the Chinese, and who, finally, did not flinch from beginning the greatest and most awful war in all history.

Another characteristic of the German Emperor is the conviction of his omnipotence. When he wrote at Munich, "*Sic volo, sic jubeo*"—it was not a pose of the moment. He expressed in those few words his firm conviction about himself. Yet after having named Herr von Buelow Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Emperor said to Count Osten-Sacken that he was happy to have *at last* succeeded in having at the head of his Diplomats, a personal friend. And when Count Osten-Sacken, expressing his astonishment, remarked that he had every opportunity of making such an appointment before, William replied—"Ah! so you believe, but it was not so easy as you think." This from a monarch, whose omnipotence is celebrated, is a ridiculous statement.



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In religious matters, the Emperor has faith, but only in his own way. His God *is above all* the God of Battles ! He believes himself to be the direct emissary of God to Mankind all over the world. He deems himself intermediary indeed—between God and his people, and destined to be the bringer of happiness first of all to Prussia, then to Germany next, and after that as a natural consequence to the whole globe. I have personally seen him on several occasions praying at church, and my impression is that he prayed fervently and earnestly, and not for a pose, as he did almost everything else. In his travels by land and sea, he always delivered sermons in person to the personnel of his entourage. Witnesses have told me that the Emperor seemed to officiate on these occasions as a Pontiff or Prince of the Church, and gave evidence of a great knowledge of the Bible. He knew very well how to quote from it in such a way as to make it appear that everything he did had biblical authority !

The Emperor is an Imperialist even in the bosom of his family. When the Empress appears at receptions the Emperor always approaches her and makes a deep bow. But it can be assumed that he does not do this out of respect for the mother of his children. NO !—He salutes her who has the divine honour of sharing his throne, and who acts as an excellent reflector of the divine rays which emanate from him !

He is an absolute autocrat over his children. His only daughter, the Princess Victoria, was an exception. For her he had every tenderness and spoilt her in every way possible. The education of his sons was a very careful one. He himself chose their professors. Once his choice was made, he gave these men a free hand with their royal charges.

Baron von Prittwitz, whom I knew intimately at Munich, where he was Military Attaché of Prussia, and

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later favourite A.D.C. to H.I.M., was nominated as chief supervisor of the Crown Prince's education. He told me that for over a year after his appointment the Emperor never said one word regarding the Crown Prince, although he had had any number of opportunities for so doing. One day, however, at a Royal Hunt, Prittwitz having drawn a stand number next to the Emperor, the latter said to him—"You are doubtless astonished that I never speak to you of my son? I am very much pleased with you, but if I have not spoken it was in order not to interfere with the line of education that you were following. I wish that the Crown Prince be above all things, a Man, with his own character. I do not wish that he be a copy of William II. When he comes to the throne he will see that which I have done well, and also anything that I have done badly, and he will then be able to act according to his own best ideas, and ideals!"

This fine profession of faith did not prevent the Emperor, when in due course the Crown Prince began to shown signs of "his own character," from punishing him severely on many occasions by sending him to command a regiment at Dantzic, and forbidding him to be seen in Berlin without his especial permission.

The Emperor pretends to love the Arts devotedly. He believes himself to be a gifted musician and a very good artist with brush and pencil. But his love of the Arts is like everything else. Music, painting, drama and poetry serve him only in so far as they can be made useful to advancing his political ideas. The famous song "To Aegir" was written as a propaganda for the Imperial German Navy. The pictures that he orders represent only the brilliant and successful scenes from German history. He especially favours chauvinism—or excessive patriotism, preferring those poems or dramas dealing with the glory of Prussia in general

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and of the Hohenzollern in particular. He ordered an opera to be written by Leonecavallo on the subject of Roland of Berlin, an opera, by the way, which Leonecavallo could never finish. From the Polish painter Baron Kossak he ordered a picture representing and glorifying the city of Marienburg. He forgot, or seemed to forget, that it was especially at Marienburg that the Poles had suffered so terribly, and when Baron Kossak, furious at the idea, handed in his resignation as Artist to the Imperial Court, the Emperor still did not understand the *faux pas* that he had made, and treated Kossak as a "Pig and an Ingrate."

In the musical world, he went so far as to correct Weber. When he returned from his voyage in the Orient, he personally assisted in the staging of the opera "Oberon" at Wiesbaden. The Emperor himself designed the decorations, which were, most of them, in execrably bad taste and vulgar, and he rewrote the finale of the opera, introducing, no one knows why—the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa to sing of the glories of his ancestors.

One of the most beautiful alleys in the Park at Berlin is completely spoilt by a series of monuments, each one more hideous than the other, representing all the Sovereigns of the House of Hohenzollern. Finally the Zoological gardens at Berlin (Tiergarten) had almost as many statues as trees! Even the inhabitants of Berlin—who have no taste at all for the Arts—were frightened at the way in which the Emperor was defacing their city with his horrible and fantastic conceptions of beauty. The Emperor did not care. On the contrary, not content with "ornamenting" his good city of Berlin, he gave New York a statue of Frederick the Great, and presented Constantinople with a monumental and frightful fountain. At Petrograd he built an Embassy that looked more like a

barracks than anything else, and he ordered to be planted on the roof two enormous Teutons of warlike mien, resting on their swords, which were intended to portray the strength of Germany. At the beginning of the war the people pulled these two horrors down and threw them into a canal!

The Emperor pretends to know and to understand everything. It must, however, be admitted that he is very well versed in most matters, and that his memory is prodigious. When I paid my farewell visit to him,—having been appointed Councillor to The Hague,—he gave me the whole history of Dutch music and choral chants. He was in correspondence with Cunimberti, the famous Italian naval constructor, and confided to him his ideas and plans for battle-ships. The Italian engineer was certain these drawings had been made by a German specialist, and was most astonished when he was informed that the draughtsman was the Emperor himself!

His family life was an exemplary one, although often he is said to have had mistresses. For a time Countess Goertz was named as such. She was the wife of one of the German nobles of high standing, who was a great personal friend of the Emperor's. The Count was an amateur sculptor—one of his works being in the Tiergarten at Berlin. As far as I am concerned I doubt these insinuations. The Countess Goertz was exceedingly handsome, but suffered from an incurable disease, and, while the Emperor was very intimate in their household, I do not think there was anything more than a platonic friendship between her and the Emperor.

As the Empress had aged greatly and the Emperor still conserved his air of youth and youthful vigour—the masses ever sought a reason for his apparent aloofness to women as far as his passions were concerned.

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Then the famous—or rather infamous—Eulenburg scandal broke out and to it the Emperor's name was instantly attached. Prince Eulenburg, whom I knew very well at Munich, where he was Prussian Minister and later Ambassador to Vienna—was publicly accused of homo-sexuality. He was denounced by his Chief Huntsman. The judicial address in the case established details which were exceedingly curious. It was learned then that Prince Eulenburg was the leader of a society known as “The Knights of the Round Table.” Among the members of this Society were men bearing the highest names in the German Empire ; for instance, both Princes Hohenhau—sons of Field-Marshal Prince Albert of Prussia, the issue of his morganatic marriage ; Baron von Wedell, who had been Attaché to the Empress Frederick, a Frenchman, M. Lecomte, Councillor of the French Embassy in Berlin, and many others. It was also learned that the Emperor himself—who honoured Prince Eulenburg with a friendship of exceptional intimacy—very often took part in the meetings of this Society. All its members were known by nicknames. The Emperor was known as “Cheri.” William did not try to hush the matter up, knowing very well that if judicial proceedings had not taken place, his name would have been even more entangled than it was. Hence the trial took place. Prince Eulenburg—broken and ill—was brought into Court on a stretcher. Finally, although the inquiry could not be brought to a conclusion as it was declared that Prince Eulenburg could not be further examined owing to the state of his health, the Hohenhau brothers lost their commands in the Army and were exiled to their country estates ; Baron von Wedell was also exiled ; and M. Lecomte was transferred to Persia, where he was, for a time, the French Minister.

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The whole details of this affair have remained a secret, even to the present day.

Prince Eulenburg, married to a Swedish Countess, had had six children by her. Those who knew the Countess knew of a certainty that her children were fathered by Eulenburg. The Prince had two hobbies—the Emperor and music. His family life was most exemplary. Yet the accusations of his Chief Huntsman were supposed to be *undeniable facts*. Be that as it may, the whole affair did not advance the prestige and popularity of the German Emperor.

As everything in this world is sooner or later forgotten, the German people gradually let this matter drop into oblivion, and there it has remained.

Of all the foreign Monarchs, William II. esteemed above all others Queen Victoria of England and had a very deep affection for her. When speaking of her to Count Osten-Sacken he said: “The greatest Statesman of Europe to-day is my Grandmother.”

He did not in the least entertain the same sentiments towards Edward VII., as he appreciated full well that in the person of the King of England he had a very dangerous adversary on the checker-board of the world.

I have already mentioned the fear with which Alexander III. of Russia had inspired him and also his relations with Nicholas II.

He venerated the old Emperor Franz Joseph of Austro-Hungary.

The murdered Archduke of Austria was not sympathetic to him in the beginning, but later—for political reasons—he formed ties of intimacy with him. It is said—and not without reason—that only a short time before the assassination of the Archduke, in an interview that he had with him in one of his castles, the German Monarch sanctioned the bellicose politics of the Habsburg Empire toward Serbia. *It is here, there-*

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*fore, that the date of the European War was really first decided on.*

In his foreign policy William regarded only one nation with an absolutely implacable hatred—*England!* He deemed this Power everywhere in his way, thwarting and blocking him, by every road he essayed, commercial, colonial and political. All his diplomacy was designed to fight this one enemy. He swallowed all the troubles Nicholas II. made in order to have Russia in the game that he intended to play. He always hoped to be able to thrust Russia into some serious complication with Great Britain.

Once, for instance, we Russians were trying out a new method of general mobilization of a brigade near the Afghan Frontier. William rushed at once to our Embassy in the hope that this was the beginning of a mobilization that would have the gravest results. He assured Count Osten-Sacken that he was even then ready to offer Russia two Army Corps for an eventual campaign against Great Britain in India.

The Emperor's feelings towards England dictated his policy with France. The ambassadors of the French Republic were objects of his special attentions. Every French Artist—Painter—Musician—or Writer—found an exceptionally warm welcome at the Court of Berlin. At the opening of the Kiel Canal, when French warships were anchored for the first time in history side by side with German ships, the Admiral and officers of the French Squadron were especially fêted.

Prior to the expedition to China against the Boxers, in which France took an equal part, the Emperor was delighted at the order of the President of the French Republic—placing the French military expedition under German command—that of Count von Waldersee. The Emperor cherished the project of an Entente between France and Russia directly aimed at England.

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But even in his relations with France, his character, impetuous and ever changing—was a fatal bar. When the Government of the French Republic did not fall in with his desires and ideas, he forgot his political programme and made his western neighbours all kinds of more or less serious trouble. He spoiled his own game completely after the Russo-Japanese War by provoking the Tangiers incident.

Russia—the Ally of France—had only just emerged from a war which had exhausted her strength. The Emperor William thought the time favourable to blackmail France, who had just concluded a treaty with England which recognized the right of Great Britain in Egypt and renounced her exclusive fishing in Newfoundland, originally granted by the Treaty of Utrecht. In return, the British Cabinet recognized the exclusive rights of France in Morocco. Although Germany was only represented in the Empire of the Scherif by four Germans,—the Mannesheim brothers—William demanded his share of commerce in Morocco. Impulsively, as usual, he decided to apply for his rights in person and went to Tangiers on his yacht—the *Hohenzollern*—escorted by a light German flotilla of armoured cruisers and destroyers. I was in Paris at the time and all political circles were very nervous. The intervention of Germany in Morocco was considered by all as direct provocation to France, who was in no way prepared for a war. A serious diplomatic reverse very painful to the *amour-propre* of France was foreseen. I remember one day when I was in the Chamber of Deputies, some one interpellated the President of the Council—Mr. Rouvier—as to what the whole affair meant. Rouvier, scarlet in the face, and deeply moved, shouted very loudly: “What do I know of it. If these pigs wish it they can enter Champagne as though entering butter.”



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Suddenly, however, two or three days before the disembarking of the Emperor William at Tangiers, Edward VII. appeared *incognito* in Paris. Notwithstanding the quasi-private nature of his visit, the English Monarch naturally received the French statesmen and conferred at great length with them.

In the evening, the President of the Republic gave him a gala dinner, followed by a reception, to which were asked—among others—all the members of the Corps Diplomatic in Paris. King Edward held a small reception after dinner and I have the details of what was said from one of the men who were actually present.

Approaching Prince Radolin, German Ambassador to France, Edward VII. commenced a conversation with him on inconsequential matters. He asked after the health of the Princess Radolin and discussed the delights of Parisian life, etc. . . . Suddenly and brusquely his voice changed and he said to the Prince with great intensity of feeling :

“My nephew is making a little trip to Tangier. I would not have it happen that European complications ensue. And, moreover, you know, behind France, he will find me. A man warned is worth two men.”

I was told that after these few words from King Edward, Prince Radolin appeared stricken by lightning and rushed from the Elysée to notify his master of the King's words.

William refrained most carefully from even putting his feet ashore on Moroccan soil and received the Moroccan authorities on board the *Hohenzollern* in the offing of Tangier's harbour.

The Algiers Conference followed and France issued from it without any humiliation whatsoever.

It may be asked, therefore, whether as William in 1904 altered his political scheme against France solely because of the intervention of Edward VII., although

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at that time Russia was completely exhausted, would the Emperor have dared to encourage the Austro-Hungary ultimatum to Serbia, and by so doing start the European War, had he known that England would join France and Russia.

It may, however, be as well to add that the sudden departure of the German Emperor—owing to his diplomatic failure—lost him the few strong adherents he had. William had shown his hand too soon. Thenceforward France fully understood his plotting and from that moment suspected all his advances! Hence the final appeal to arms was solely the result of the German Emperor's over-subtle plotting and scheming.

In his domestic policies William is the Authority "par excellence," with the powers of an absolute autocracy. To the idea of national representation he is instinctively antipathetic. He does not recognize the rights of the Deputies to have any ideas of their own. As has been said, he did not bother with the Party of the Right. He anathematized the Social Democrats with the sobriquet of: "Vaterlandslosen Schurken" (Rascals without a Country). When he *had* to give way to the Reichstag, and this often happened, he was furious and criticized both parties bitterly and frankly to his intimates. He was almost always in a difficult position—where his domestic policies were concerned—in his dual capacity of King of Prussia and Emperor of Germany. As King of Prussia he, normally, should have been able to rely on the Agrarians (the Junker Party), which Party has ever been the support of the Kings of Prussia and has supplied the best elements to the Prussian Armies. They were essentially reactionaries. But as Emperor of Germany William found it very difficult to follow a reactionary policy. The German Empire had been created—as Bismarck said—by schoolmasters ("Das Deutsche

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Reich ist von Schullehrern geschaffen worden"). Its power and its extension were principally due to the commercial and industrial classes. Naturally enough, these elements which had established the German Empire and greatly contributed to its vast power, belonged to the Liberal party. William had to pursue an Agrarian policy, which exasperated the Liberals, and yet whenever he appeared to be in favour of the policy advocated by the Liberals the Agrarians promptly set up a wild clamour. This situation often placed the Emperor in most embarrassing positions, especially when the extension of Credit, vitally necessary to him for the enlarging of his armed forces and especially for his Navy, was in question. He then had recourse to flattering the Liberals and, of course, the capitalists. He also made use of a wise and cunning propaganda all over the country through the Press. After having proclaimed the principle: "The future of Germany is on the Seas" ("Die Zukunft Deutschlands ist auf dem Wasser") he covered the country with a net of Naval Societies ("Flotten Vereine"). He even nominated the members and then gave them high decorations and procured all the moneys necessary for their work under his direct orders. He also showered favours on the capitalists, including the Jews; Jewish bankers, the "Friedlander," the "Furstenberg" and others were his habitual guests on the *Hohenzollern* for his annual voyage of pleasure to Norwegian waters. He said to Ballin—the great Shipping Magnate: "Ballin, you will yet be one of my Ministers!" And when Ballin answered: "You forget, Sire, that I am a Jew," the Emperor replied quickly: "I need them also" ("Die kann ich auch brauchen").

Desirous of protecting his Commerce and being unable to follow a frankly commercial policy—thanks to the Junkers—he necessarily threw himself into his

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Colonial Policy with great vigour in order to procure new markets for Germany's products and also to avoid emigration to the colonies of other nations, which he always dreaded and which was rapidly growing—especially to the United States.

Then his attention was called to the fact that the increase of the German element in the United States could only have favourable results in influencing American Politics even as he might dictate; he announced: "You do not know my Germans. When they are in America they drink beer as usual and sing 'Die Wacht am Rhein.' They have on the walls of their houses portraits of my grandfather; of Bismarck and of Moltke. But you will not often find my portrait, and in political matters they have become thorough Yankees."

As the best opportunities for colonization overseas were in British and French hands, he had to be content with territory of a secondary class, and to his keen disappointment, the German colonies were far from prosperous.

Germany, though very strong commercially, is not strong in the art of colonization. Count von Goetzen, Governor of Dar-es-Salam, said to me personally: "This colony is flooded with officials. In the city quantities of well-uniformed police may be seen, but a few kilometres from Dar-es-Salam I have met leopards, and, about a week ago, lions devoured two railway conductors who were on a train standing in a siding, at the very gates of the city. Our administration is perfect, but we sadly lack workmen. The natives prefer to work in the British and Portuguese Colonies rather than for us."

It was said in Berlin that the Emperor dreamed at one time of buying outright the Belgian Congo, but was forced to relinquish this idea in view of the very

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strong Anglo-French opposition. I was present when the old King Leopold of Belgium visited the German Emperor at Berlin. The Emperor,—who disliked Leopold in his heart of hearts, because of his penchant for mistresses and his all-round doubtful morality—treated him nevertheless with exceptional courtesy and paid him many attentions.

The German Emperor is a military monarch from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. He adores all soldiery and military matters, and enters into the most minute details of military life. Scarcely a day passes without his having visited some regiment or other. He asks himself to dinner in the officers' messes regularly and spends hours on end therein. In order to lessen the expense of his officers on these occasions he especially forbade the drinking of *French Champagne from German bot les!* I was informed that he was well aware of this deception which was practised for his sake, and cheerfully acquiesced in it. It is the custom that when the Emperor honours one or other regiment with his presence, the Colonel addresses a patriotic speech to him to which the Monarch always answers at great length.

A few days before the fall of Prince von Bue'ow, —an unusually stormy session took place in the Reichstag because of a letter the Emperor had written to the German Ambassador at Paris. All parties combined against the personal and anti-constitutional interference of the Emperor in serious matters of State. The members' criticism was specially directed against the impulsive and mischievous speeches of the Emperor. Prince von Buelow solemnly promised to put a stop to the verbosity of his master. Shortly after this the Emperor was dining at the officers' mess in the barracks of a certain regiment, and the Colonel made the usual address. The Emperor answered: "My dear Colonel,



PRINCE VON BUE



HERR VON BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

## WILLIAM II

I would like to be able to say a few words to you all here . . .” There he stopped and signified his inability to proceed by putting his hand over his mouth. This little incident proves how the Emperor could be influenced by the Reichstag, notwithstanding his great power and general omnipotence.

When he made his official inspections of troops, incomparable and peerless actor as he was, he made himself up very cleverly and by means of paints to closely resemble Cæsar. To do him justice, *he* knew how to talk to his soldiers, and also how to excite their patriotism to the highest pitch. He was unquestionably very popular with the army, and was the idol of the German soldiery. Their discipline and enthusiasm in the present war give complete proof of this.

Such is the man who directs the destinies of the German Empire. To describe his most complex character fully whole volumes would be needed. I have only given a personal impression of him which was obtained through living fourteen years in Germany. Incontestably, despite all his faults, the German Emperor is a distinct and rare personality. His projects and ideas are vast, embracing not only Germany but the entire world. But in the putting of them into execution his extremely impulsive character—his habit of acting on the spur of the moment, his sudden decisions made without consideration, and his extreme vanity, created very serious obstacles to his success. His plans were blocked because he had not calculated their effect. In his foreign policies he wanted too much, and he always wanted to act immediately.

Obsessed with the idea of German greatness he tried to exploit the whole universe, and in so doing naturally added to the list of his enemies. He plunged towards the Turkish East, encouraged Austria on her Balkan policy and battered his head against Russia, and in

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so doing seriously disturbed the relations between Russia and Germany. In following his colonial policy he feverishly hastened the building of war ships, proclaimed himself Grand Admiral of the Atlantic, and found himself face to face with Britain's immense sea power. He assiduously cultivated France in the hope of winning her to his strong anti-British policies, and on the spur of the moment at Tangier and later at Agadir he again provoked in the memories of all present Allies the bloody pages of 1870.

He did everything he could to win the friendship of the United States. All his favours and all his personal attentions were showered on the Americans who came in their yachts to Kiel in the racing season. He gave the city of New York a statue of Frederick II., executed by himself, and at the same time spread a veritable network of spies all over the United States, thus making the very name of German anathema there, and by inconceivable treachery for the intervention of that vast power in the European War.

His political projects are incontestably worthy of a great Sovereign, but when it comes to putting them into operation, faults and weaknesses are apparent which can only be the outcome of a very questionable and mediocre mind.

The unlimited ambition of the Kaiser and his arrogant desire to be the centre of attraction have practically paralysed all his acts. He was not satisfied with sowing seeds, but he wanted also immediately to reap the harvest. He wanted to do everything himself and not leave anything to his successors. Evidently his main object in life was to write his own epitaph as "William the Greatest," and this was one of the essential causes of the present struggle.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE GERMAN MINISTERS

I DID not personally know Count de Caprivi de Montecuccoli, the Emperor's second Imperial Chancellor, who succeeded Bismarck. He was known as a good soldier, absolutely honest, but little prepared for the part he was destined to play. In speaking of his own dismissal and Caprivi's appointment in his place, Bismarck, just created General in Chief, said, "The Emperor has made a General of his foremost Chancellor, and one of his best Generals he has made a Chancellor." The short tenure of Count Caprivi in office was foreshadowed when he denounced the Treaty with Russia which had been made by Bismarck in the days of his power, and also by an anti-Agrarian policy. Caprivi fell under the violent attacks of the Junker party.

Prince Hohenlohe, who succeeded him, is hardly known in Europe or even in Germany. He nevertheless deserves a certain amount of attention. He had previously been President of the Ministerial Council in Bavaria, where he was greatly liked and esteemed by all parties without exception. He later held the position of Ambassador in Paris and succeeded, in spite of many serious difficulties he had to contend with while there, in making himself very popular. Before being made Chancellor he was the Emperor's personal representative in Alsace-Lorraine. After he

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became Chancellor he had to accept as Foreign Minister Herr von Buelow, a great favourite of the Emperor, and who from the time of his entrance into politics was considered in Berlin as successor to Hohenlohe sooner or later. The position of the Chancellor at once became very ambiguous. To please the new star, which was in the ascendant, the flatterers at Court hastened to intrigue against the Chancellor. But it must be admitted that Prince Hohenlohe accepted this disagreeable state of affairs with a princeliness which was characteristic. He allowed his enemies full rein. One day he said to me, "When I was first Minister in Bavaria, Ambassador in Paris and the Emperor's representative in Alsace-Lorraine, it was said of me that I was a great Statesman. I was the only one to disbelieve this! Now that I am Chancellor of the Empire the Berlin world would have it that I am an ignorant brute, and I am the only man who does not believe it!"

Prince Hohenlohe had married a Russian, the Princess Wittgenstein, daughter of the hero of the Napoleonic Wars of 1812, and was a great landed proprietor in Russia. He was an ardent advocate of a strong and binding entente with Russia. Indeed this was his political creed. At the beginning of his chancellorship he enjoyed a certain influence. As the Empress' uncle he had the freedom of the Imperial Court, but very soon this influence had to give way to that of von Buelow, whose subtle and flattering manner and nature were gratifying to the Sovereign.

Prince Hohenlohe vacated his office in the same way as he came to it—with all the dignity of a great nobleman and the manners of a gentleman. He was never known to complain of the Emperor, or to sneer at his successor as Bismarck did. The new Chancellor was diametrically his opposite. Von Buelow

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was the perfect type of a Careerist or Arrivist. He was very astute and machiavellian. A master of the art of flattering those who could be of use to him, possessed of extraordinary erudition, an exceptional memory, and a superlatively wonderful oratorical talent, von Buelow was a brilliant conversationalist, and a diplomat of great finesse. I will not go so far as to say that his policies were conceived or carried out on this scale, but I think that his chief political fault was pandering too much to the caprices of his Imperial Master. Left to himself von Buelow might have risen to be a really remarkable statesman, for he had all the qualities that are necessary for the making of one. His speeches in the Reichstag were always in good taste, and much admired, although these speeches were sometimes very insincere and rang hollow. The first time he addressed the Reichstag he roused the unanimous applause of all the deputies. I was present at the time, and left with Herr Kardorff, one of the leaders of the Party of the Right. He was most enthusiastic about von Buelow and his speech, but after having gone a few steps with me he said suddenly: "My dear Schelking, when one stops to *think*, what did Buelow *really* say?" This characteristic was the most remarkable of all others in the Emperor's fourth Chancellor. There is no need to detail the policies followed by Prince von Buelow while he was in power. He was a docile instrument in the Emperor's hands.

In his private life the Prince was a most delightful and charming man. He captivated all who came near him by his intelligence, his brilliant conversation, and his great amiability. But when one knew him better one detected a falseness beneath all these qualities.

During the whole of his stay in office he had but one really patriotic impulse. That was on the day

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when he promised the Reichstag to control his Sovereign's habit of making speeches, and to assume the responsibility for them. But at the same time and by that promise he threw aside his protector, to whom he owed his rapid rise to power, and risked his whole career, having in nine years advanced from the position of Councillor to the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg to the Chancellorship of the German Empire.

Prince Buelow married an Italian, the Princess Camporeale, who had been Countess Doenhof in her first marriage. She had ever cultivated music and poetry and was a musician far above the ordinary. Pupil of Liszt and friend of Wagner, she had a salon which was frequented not only by the highest Berlin Society, but also by the whole artistic and literary world. Herr Stein, the well-known editor of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, was one of von Buelow's intimates. As the Prince assiduously cultivated the Press, he often received Stein even when ambassadors were waiting to see him on matters of State.

In the salon of the Princess all speech was unrestricted and frankness cultivated, and in this way Prince von Buelow was always in touch with the world at large, and with the ideas of all classes of the people. As his wife had become engaged to her first husband in Count Osten-Sacken's drawing-room in Florence, where he was Chargé d'Affaires in 1865, the relations between the Chancellor's family and our ambassador were of the most intimate kind. But our ambassador was rather suspicious of Prince von Buelow. He was not sure of his sincerity, and told me more than once that he would rather have to do with Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, who was a gross personality at best, but with whom one was always sure where one stood.

Prince Buelow fell after the promise he made to

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the Reichstag with regard to the Imperial habit of making speeches. William was furious with Buelow for giving this promise and a few months later the Chancellor was suddenly dismissed. But, and this is strange, the Emperor's irritation with him did not last long and Prince von Buelow continues, even to-day, to keep his master's great friendship and favour. During the present war he has filled the position of Ambassador to Rome, and it is certain his name will be prominent among those of the German plenipotentiaries to the Peace Conference.

The discovery of a successor to Prince von Buelow proved most difficult. It was necessary to find a statesman who was not only a diplomat but well versed in the domestic conditions then existing in Germany. For a time Count von Wedel was considered for the position. He was then representative of the Emperor in Alsace-Lorraine, and had held the post of Ambassador to Vienna for several years. It was even said at Berlin that the position of the Chancellorship had actually been offered to him, but that he had declined. Finally the Emperor's choice fell on Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg. This nomination was entirely unexpected! The new Chancellor was of obscure birth, his ancestors were Jewish, and were a family of bankers at Frankfurt. The family name was Bethmann, and the noble name of Hollweg came to it by marriage. He had never held a diplomatic post, but had been Chief of Police at Potsdam (Polizeipresident), Governor of the Rhine Province and finally Governor-General of the Province of Brandenburg, of which the capital is Berlin.

At Potsdam he had been in close touch with the Emperor and he knew how to improve his opportunities, and gain the Monarch's favour. He knew nothing of the basic principles of diplomacy. Our Ambassador

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in Berlin told me he was absolutely useless, that it was a waste of time to talk to him, and that he preferred to discuss important matters with one of the Secretaries of State. But gradually von Bethmann-Hollweg found himself. At the interview between the Kaiser and Nicholas II. in a Baltic port, Sazonoff, then our Minister of Foreign Affairs, intimated that it was most agreeable to discuss affairs with him. This remark is characteristic of Sazonoff, as it was von Bethmann-Hollweg who forced the withdrawal by Sazonoff of our arrangement with Germany regarding Persia, which was humiliating for us.

When he resigned his post Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg had achieved the reputation of having been entirely honest in all his dealings, but otherwise a nonentity, lacking in any personal initiative and willingly agreeing to his master's slightest wish and whim.

I did not know Dr. Michaelis—his successor—nearly so well. But he only occupied a second-rate position at the best. It was said of him that he was Prussian to the backbone, and eager to copy Bismarck, but lacking any resemblance to the Iron Chancellor, with the exception of his personal grossness, which was notorious. In that he indeed resembled the great German. It has never been understood why he was chosen by the Emperor.

The next Imperial Chancellor, I knew while I was stationed in Munich exceedingly well. Count Hertling is a Bavarian by birth, and during my official life he was at different times a deputy in the Bavarian Chamber and in the Reichstag. He belonged to the centre Catholic Party, of which he was one of the leaders up to the very day on which he was nominated to the Chancellorship. He was a thorough-going Catholic. More than once it was expected he would be appointed Prime Minister of Bavaria. But the

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old Prince Regent—although of a very liberal mind where religion was concerned—was afraid of Hertling's super-pronounced Catholic views and ideas. Ludwig III., the then King of Bavaria, devout Catholic himself, made him President of the Ministerial Council, and Minister of Foreign Affairs. I am forced to believe that his nomination as Chancellor of the Empire—without wishing in the least to detract from his many strong mental qualities—was made first to flatter and please the *amour-propre* of the Bavarian, and secondly so that the Emperor could have at his right hand one who had the ear of the Pope, who could therefore easily be used to approach the Holy Father in case it should be necessary to have the support of the Holy See in the peace pourparlers which must come. In view of the various complications which exist in Germany and Austria, I know the above to be the situation.

I personally knew very well two other important ministers. Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, and the present (June, 1918) Foreign Secretary, Herr von Kuehlmann. Baron Marschall was the predecessor of Prince von Buelow in the office of Foreign Secretary. He was a Badener by birth and a State Attorney by profession. Bismarck noticed his speeches at that time, and proposed he should take up a diplomatic career. He did so and attained the high rank of Foreign Secretary, which he occupied during the chancellorship of von Caprivi, and for two years under Prince Hohenlohe. He was a man of remarkable intelligence and force of character, which was only equalled by his personal grossness. He treated foreign diplomats with the greatest negligence imaginable, and made them wait in his ante-chamber sometimes for hours at a time. Hence all foreign representatives complained bitterly of him. He only made an exception in the

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case of Count Osten-Sacken, after having attempted to treat him as he did the others. But our Ambassador taught him a lesson.

One day, a few minutes before dinner, at eight o'clock in the evening, the secretary of the Foreign Secretary came to our Embassy and communicated—verbally to Count Osten-Sacken—the desire of Baron Marschall to speak with him at once. Annoyed at this unprecedented method of procedure, our Ambassador said to the envoy: "Acquaint the Secretary of State with the fact that I am about to sit down to dinner. After having dined I shall smoke my cigar quietly, and if I have time in the course of the evening, I will come to see him."

About 10.30 Count Osten-Sacken went to the Foreign Office. Baron Marschall was awaiting him at the door and was voluble in his excuses and apologies. "You are right in excusing yourself, my dear Marschall," said our Ambassador, "for it must indeed be something most urgent which permitted you to disturb the Russian Ambassador at so unreasonable an hour."

Baron Marschall took this lesson to heart, and also took very good care not to run the risk of experiencing another such snub in his dealings with our Ambassador. From that time onward, the relations between our Embassy and the German Foreign Office left nothing to be desired. The Baron Marschall was a supporter of our entente with Germany and—with our assistance—of one with France also. His master-stroke in diplomacy which encouraged such an entente, was the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which brought the Chino-Japanese war to an end. The Japanese had occupied Port Arthur and seemed very desirous of remaining there. But France and Russia strongly protested against the establishment of the Empire of the Rising Sun on



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the Asiatic Continent. Pourparlers were proceeding and were almost at an end when—quite unexpectedly—Baron Marschall made the suggestion that Germany should be accepted as the ally of France and Russia in the Port Arthur question. The Cabinets of Petrograd and Paris, unable to refuse this gratuitous German collaboration, had to accept it, and thus for the first time since 1870, France, Russia and Germany worked towards the same end. It was the dream of William II. seemingly coming true. Baron Marschall had made it practical, and it was the German Emperor who later spoiled it all.

The Foreign Secretary fell after the famous legal case of Lutzow-Leckardt, that caused such tremendous scandal at the time. These gentlemen had forged letters compromising the Imperial Government, and were accused of high treason. As the contents of these letters chiefly concerned Baron Marschall, he was attacked most bitterly by a certain section of the German Press with the object of bringing about his downfall. The Foreign Secretary—remembering his legal past—presented himself at the Bar of Justice to defend himself. He began his speech, which was in the nature of a plea against the abuses of the Prussian Government, with these words—"In coming here I take refuge in public opinion" (*Flucht in die Oeffentlichkeit*). His defence of himself was masterly. Lutzow and Leckardt were condemned, but the whole country applauded the plea of Baron Marschall. Yet a week later the Emperor discharged him. William never forgave him for having had recourse to the public opinion instead of trusting in him.

Two or three days after the trial, Marschall being ill, Count Osten-Sacken went to see him. He complimented him on his great success, but he also asked him if the whole affair were not likely to bring upon

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him the displeasure of the Monarch. The Foreign Secretary answered, "Rest assured, I am stronger than ever before." Two days later he was discharged. Nevertheless, acceding to the insistence of Prince von Buelow, the Emperor appointed him Ambassador to Constantinople, and it was there especially that the Baron gave full proof of his exceptional diplomatic powers. It was he who proposed the trip of William II. to the Orient, who crystallized the Turco-German *rapprochement*, and made the Sultan a vassal to the German Emperor. To him is the credit due for the project of the Bagdad Railway, and it was he who prepared all the details for the execution of this great project. Again it was he who succeeded in placing German officers in positions of high command in the Ottoman Army. To do William II. justice, though he did not love the Baron he covered him with distinctions. He sent him from Constantinople to London as ambassador, and there Baron Marschall died—having but shortly before been appointed Chevalier of the Black Eagle—the highest order in Prussia.

Herr von Kuehlmann came to power, thanks exclusively to the Emperor's favour. There can be no comparison between him and such a forceful man as Baron Marschall. I knew him intimately in Munich, when he was a boy. His mother honoured me with her friendship. She was a superb musician, and a by no means undistinguished composer. Herr von Kuehlmann, sen., a very rich man, was a merchant of Munich, having made his vast fortune at Constantinople in the construction of the Anatolian Railways. His wife, née Baronne Redwitz, belonged to the highest Bavarian aristocracy. Their son, young Kuehlmann, was destined for a Bavarian diplomat's career, but his ambition was higher than that, and he entered the service of the Empire. His first appointments were

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not very encouraging to his ambition. He had to be content with posts of secondary importance, such as South America, Persia, etc. One day he was presented to the Emperor, and made a very favourable impression, but he owes his final success to somewhat unusual circumstances. Among the members of the Russian Embassy at London during the reign of Edward VII. was a certain Monsieur Poklewsky-Koziell, to-day the Prussian Minister to Roumania. He was First Secretary and later Councillor to the London Embassy, and enjoyed the confidence and was on terms of some intimacy with the British Sovereign. Monsieur Poklewsky was thus popular at the British Court, and much sought after by all British hostesses. He was very rich, and being a man of considerable intelligence used his fortune to make his position still better. During one of his visits to London the German Emperor met Poklewsky, and learnt of the exceptional position the latter occupied. William wished to secure just such a man as Poklewsky for the German Embassy, and with his impulsiveness appointed Baron Eckhart von Eckhardstein as Councillor. The new Councillor had two trumps in his hand for the game. He had married the daughter of Sir John Blundell Maple, and she had a very large fortune in her own right. But very soon after his appointment the Emperor perceived that the man he had made Councillor in London only resembled Poklewsky in the matter of wealth. The intelligence of the Russian diplomat left him entirely out of the running. The Emperor discharged Von Eckhardstein as suddenly as he had appointed him, and remembering von Kuchlmann, appointed him to the London post. This was the beginning of von Kuchlmann's brilliant career.

Without being quite able to attain the position Poklewsky had reached, Kuchlmann succeeded in

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worming his way cleverly into British society and becoming a member of the best clubs. Gradually he obtained the privilege of sending personal reports to the Emperor. It is possible that he was deceived with regard to the real intentions of the British Cabinet, for he assured his Sovereign that Great Britain would never intervene in the European War the Emperor premeditated. Even so, the Emperor did not withdraw his support of Kuehlmann. When it became a question of encouraging Turkey to favour an alliance with Germany, von Kuehlmann was sent to Constantinople. Monsieur de Giers, one time Russian Ambassador to Turkey, and later Ambassador to Italy, told me that the Turks in his time had no intention of breaking their neutrality if such a war occurred. There were then two parties at Constantinople. One, led by the Grand Vizier, worked for strict neutrality, the other, led by Enver Pasha, determined on an alliance with Germany. After war had broken out four days were sufficient for von Kuehlmann to persuade the Turks to allow the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* to attack the Russian coast on the Black Sea. It is probably due to this success that Kuehlmann later owed his appointment to the post of Foreign Secretary.

It is necessary to add a few words regarding Germany's foreign representatives in various countries, whose members played important parts at their various posts until within a few days of the actual breaking out of the war. The choice of the Emperor in these matters was not always happy. He permitted himself to be guided—as usual—purely by personal reasons and personal policies. In this manner Count Pourtales was sent to Petrograd as German Ambassador—one of the most difficult diplomatic posts. Mentally, he was not nearly big enough for the position. In the same way Count de Monts, a typical Prussian, stiff

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and severe, was appointed Ambassador to Rome, where he was intensely disliked.

Count Pourtales—married to Countess Kanitz—was my colleague at The Hague, where he was a distinct success. He went from there as Prussian Minister to Munich, and there too made for himself an enviable position. From Munich he was appointed Ambassador to Petrograd. Justice must be done him by saying that he did everything he could to please. Very rich in his own right, his dinners and other entertainments were of frequent occurrence, and always in excellent taste. His receptions were noted for the *éclat* with which they went off, and the number of notable people present. But, diplomat of the old school as he was, he was only seen in the most aristocratic circles and salons. He did not seem to realize that the times had changed, and that a foreign diplomat who was earnestly desirous of knowing the true state of public opinion in Russia should not confine himself solely to high society in Petrograd. Furthermore, Count Pourtales was not as well versed in all matters pertaining to his duties as he should have been. It was known later that he expected the outbreak of a revolution in Russia the day after Germany declared war, a revolution which he said, in a code message I happened to decipher, should immediately make it impossible for Russia to fight or give assistance to the Allies. Yet, as the world knows, Russia struggled to do its best from the very beginning, despite the most terrible handicaps imposed upon the country and people by an incompetent government and treacherous ministers.

In political circles at Petrograd, Count Pourtales was not taken very seriously. He was deemed vain and possessed of but little intelligence. This was indeed true, for when by chance he wished to be really astute and cunning, he was the more easily trapped.

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Thus, for instance, a few months before the war, an article of the most virulent kind attacking the *amour-propre* of Russia appeared in the *Cologne Gazette*. It was proved that it had been inspired by Count von Dohna, chief A.D.C. to the German Emperor, then attached to the Russian Emperor's person, at the instigation of Monsieur Lucius, Councillor at the German Embassy in Petrograd. Both men had to leave the Russian capital, and Count Pourtales was seriously compromised. The whole policy of the German Embassy in Russia was centred on the Count's firm conviction that Russia would never accept a war with Germany. He had been spoiled by the diplomatic success he achieved in 1909, over the annexation of Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary.

In 1914, at the time of the Serbian ultimatum, which unleashed the dogs of war in Europe, Count Pourtales too hastily concluded that he was going to place another diplomatic feather in Germany's cap by achieving complete success in the game of threatening Russia with war. The Declaration of War made him lose his head completely. I well remember his horrified astonishment, which for a time bordered on hysterics, when he handed our Foreign Minister S. D. Sazonoff his government's note declaring war. He was very pale and trembling all over, and was so beside himself when he left the Russian minister's presence that he forgot some important papers.

The German Ambassador to Paris, Baron von Schoen, was similarly not equal to his task. He came of a small and unknown family of Jewish origin, his father having been a banker at Darmstadt. Baron von Schoen was far from being a serious diplomat, and confined himself, while in Paris, to playing the part of a thorough *bon viveur* and man of the world. His career was one of constant shifts and changes, and,

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curiously enough, I personally played a certain part in his promotion. After having spent many years at Petrograd and Paris as Councillor to the German Embassies, he was appointed minister to one of the South American Republics. His vanity wounded, von Schoen refused the post. Prince von Buelow—who in any case did not like him—offered him an even less important post, that of Minister of Prussia at Oldenburg, and he notified the Baron that a second refusal would be deemed sufficient reason for his immediate discharge from the diplomatic service. Von Schoen handed in his resignation, but was appointed Grand Master of Ceremonies at the Court of Coburg, where—nevertheless—he did not remain very long because he was not liked by the Duchess of Coburg (only sister of the Emperor Alexander III.). He then retired to a small estate he owned in Bavaria, and set to work to criticize the Prussian Court. One day while he was staying for a short time in Berlin, presumably as I had known him very well in Petrograd and Bavaria, he confided to me his regret and disappointment at being out of the diplomatic service, and his earnest desire to re-enter it. He added that he had done everything he could to see Prince von Buelow, but that the latter carefully avoided him. Finally he asked if I would be his intermediary through Count Osten-Sacken, and try and obtain an invitation for him to the dinner which was to be held the following night at the Russian Embassy, and to which the Imperial Chancellor was coming. As the invitations had already been issued, Count Osten-Sacken suggested that he come in during the evening. Baron von Schoen hastened to accept this suggestion and had a long conversation with the Chancellor, which resulted in his appointment as Minister to Copenhagen, where later he met Monsieur Isvolsky, who at that time repre-

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sented the Russian Emperor at the Danish Court. Both of them being ambitious men they soon understood one another and concluded a pact. Baron von Schoen promised that he would do his best to obtain for Isvolsky the post of Ambassador to Berlin, and Isvolsky agreed to do his best to obtain for the Baron the post of Ambassador to Petrograd. As it turned out, Isvolsky succeeded. Von Schoen became German Ambassador to Russia, and from there went in the same capacity to Paris. Baron von Schoen's intrigue in favour of Isvolsky met a stumbling-block in the finesse of my chief, Count Osten-Sacken. He went to Petrograd and presented his resignation to the Emperor without a word of warning, explaining to him the utter impossibility of continuing his work in Berlin, continually undermined by an intrigue, the headquarters of which were in Copenhagen. Nicholas did not like sudden shocks. He begged Count Osten-Sacken to remain at his post, promising to put an end to Isvolsky's intrigues. The latter stayed on at Copenhagen, but—as may seem very strange to those ignorant of the character of Nicholas II., but most natural to those who know it—Isvolsky, a few months later, became Foreign Minister at Petrograd.

It is necessary to give these details in order to draw attention to the fact that the *personal* interests of the Russian and German foreign representatives always took precedence of the best interests of the two nations, despite such vitally serious times as those immediately prior to the outbreak of the war. Personal intrigues were invariably the order of the day, and unfortunately, the characters both of William and of Nicholas—although usually so opposite in all things—lent themselves to this dangerous state of affairs. Pourtales and von Schoen knew how to flatter the *amour-propre* of their respective Sovereigns. They made an art of



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sycophancy. M. Sazonoff, for instance, one of the last foreign ministers appointed by Nicholas, who held his portfolio much longer than any of his predecessors, distributed appointments of minister and ambassadors, not because of any talent or efficiency of the men he chose but exclusively by his personal liking for them. This is well illustrated by the appointment of Monsieur Sverbeff, our last ambassador to Berlin, who was in no way fitted to fill the position of my former chief Count Osten-Sacken.

The Emperor William had better luck in his choice of an ambassador in London. Prince Lichnowsky was essentially a gentleman in every acceptance of the term. He belonged to an old and aristocratic Silesian family ; he was very rich and very well read, a fine conversationalist, and had considerable finesse. In London he made for himself entirely by his own skilful efforts, an exceedingly enviable position, both in political circles and in the drawing-rooms of the British capital. Unfortunately, I have every reason to believe that his diplomatic actions were somewhat paralysed by von Kuehlmann, who was Councillor of the Embassy at the time.

The German Emperor had entrusted the Embassy at Vienna to Herr von Tchirsky, emphatically a person of a gross and vulgar nature. The following episode proves his lack of subtlety, and his inability to adapt himself to circumstances. At a Court Ball given at Petrograd, Herr von Tchirsky, who was present, and he was then Councillor to the German Embassy there, was walking with a lady on his arm, when in the crowd he bumped into the Grand Duke Vladimir, the Emperor's Uncle. The Grand Duke, whose pleasantness was of a somewhat ponderous nature, said to Herr

EDITOR'S NOTE : This was written before the publication of the Lichnowsky memoirs. They completely justify the author's belief.

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von Tchirsky's companion—"What can you find to talk about to a diplomat? They are always so frightfully dull. Come with me instead," and he offered the lady his arm. Von Tchirsky's Prussian pride was wounded. He complained to his Chief, Prince Radolin, about the matter, making his version of the incident appear much more serious than it really was. Radolin went alone to see the Foreign Minister (Isvolsky) and insisted on an apology from the Grand Duke. Isvolsky reported the incident to the Emperor in person, who—on his part—spoke to the Grand Duke. The latter was exceedingly astonished, for he had not the least intention of hurting the feelings of Tchirsky, and much less those of Germany. The Grand Duke explained this to Prince Radolin, but naturally this incident did not tend to increase the popularity of the members of the German Embassy in diplomatic and social circles in Petrograd. The majority of the more important houses were closed thereafter to Von Tchirsky, who had in consequence to be moved to another post. Even the position of the German Ambassador was seriously compromised, and shortly after Prince Radolin was suddenly transferred to Paris. Imagine how much adaptability there was in the character of Tchirsky when it was a question of dealing with really serious diplomatic affairs. One suspects Germany did not desire to adapt herself to her circumstances but was constantly on the look out for grievances.

Before having been raised by the Emperor to the position and dignity of a prince of the German Empire, the new ambassador to Paris was known as Count Radolinsky. A Pole by birth, he had great landed estates in the province of Posen. In his youth he had adopted a courtier's life and had become Grand Master of Ceremonies at the Court of Crown Prince Frederick

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—later Emperor of Germany under the title of Frederick III. He was the Crown Prince's most intimate friend, and also possessed the fullest confidence and friendship of the future Empress of Germany, who was the daughter of Queen Victoria of England. As is also known, during the last years of the reign of William I. (1888 to 1890) the future Emperor Frederick was dying at San Remo, of an illness that was to cause his death after a reign of a hundred days. During this period an intrigue was in full swing at Berlin which had as its object the abdication of the Crown Prince of his rights to the German Throne in favour of his son, the present Emperor. Prince William, who was then twenty-eight years of age, and who was very impatient to obtain the throne, was fully cognizant of the details of this nefarious intrigue and was not only wholly a party to it, but energetic in its furtherance in order that he might the more quickly achieve supreme powers.

Bismarck was also entangled in this intrigue—of his own volition, but he committed the error of being too sure of William, whom he hoped and expected to become a docile instrument in his hands. He feared the accession of the Crown Prince, whose political ideas often did not coincide with his. The intriguers were almost sure that the Crown Prince, ill as he was, would balk their wishes, but they also knew that they would find a serious obstacle in the person of Princess Victoria, who for her part wished to ascend the throne, if only for a few days! The reason for this was chiefly a financial one. As Princess of Great Britain, Princess Victoria was far from being rich. If she were still only Crown Princess on the death of her husband, her Civil List would have naturally been greatly lessened, if she became Dowager. It was decided to try and use the Princess,

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and to do this, Prince Radolin was chosen. Notwithstanding his intimate relations and devotion to Frederick, which he emphasized on every possible occasion, he promised his assistance to the scheme. As is known, the intrigue failed, and the Crown Prince became Emperor for one hundred days, but Prince William did not forget Radolin's services. As soon as he ascended the throne he appointed Count Radolinsky Ambassador to Constantinople, and created him a prince of the German Empire, under the name of Radolin. Later he transferred him to the Embassy at Petrograd, and thence to the same post at Paris.

This incident shows the despicable intriguing of the present German Emperor against his own father and mother, and it also shows to how great an extent Prince Radolin lent himself to acts that were aimed at those who had been kindest to him, and had benefited him in many ways.

With Prince Radolin, I conclude my short description of the principal German diplomats William II. chose during his reign to assist him in the execution of his European policies. It must be said that all these statesmen were, with rare exceptions, men of second-rate intelligence and capacity, and only useful in promptly executing their master's orders. Thus it is obvious that on the shoulders of Emperor William II. must rest the *sole responsibility* for all of Germany's foreign policies which finally resulted in the present world-wide war.

## CHAPTER V

### NICHOLAS II

His Character. The Ex-Emperor as Husband and Father. The Empress and her Influence. Rasputin—The Grand Dukes

THE Emperor Nicholas II. succeeded to the throne of his ancestors under circumstances which but little resembled the accession of his father.

Alexander III. had found Russia seething with revolutionary movements and dissensions of many kinds ; his father had been assassinated ; the army was disorganized and the navy conspicuous by its non-existence for any practical purpose. He left his son as a legacy an Empire quiet within its borders, and a nation respected by the world in general. The army left nothing to be desired, and the navy had reached very respectable proportions. But the Emperor Alexander had pursued a reactionary policy and it was soon evident that this could not last. Liberal reforms were spoken of on all sides. The nation impatiently awaited these reforms and centred its hopes on the young Sovereign.

Very soon after he ascended the throne, Nicholas II. received from all parts of his immense Empire addresses expressing the fealty and also the hopes of his people. The address of the people of the Province of Tver (situated between Petrograd and Moscow) was particularly explicit. Its most fundamental suggestion was the necessity for national representation. But the

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monarch was proved a disappointment to his people. At the audience granted by him to the representatives of Tver, he declared that he would continue the political policies of his father and termed as "insensate" the suggestions of his people. The impression made by the Imperial discourse was disastrous and the popularity of the Emperor was undermined.

It was quite evident to impartial observers that Nicholas II. would under no circumstances be able to continue the policy of his illustrious father. In the first place, times had greatly changed, and in the second, the young Emperor totally lacked the characteristics of his predecessor. Where Alexander III. had been firm and decisive in his actions—Nicholas II. was irresolute and weak. From his earliest childhood he had been absolutely under the dominance of his powerful father, and had no initiative whatever. His mother entirely lacked strength of character and her influence was of no use at all in helping to form the character of her son. He, furthermore, had the misfortune to have as preceptor, General Danilovitch, who was in no way equal to the great responsibilities of his position and duties. He was very narrow-minded and suspicious. He eternally told his young charge: "You must remember always, Highness, that everybody who approaches wishes to obtain something from you." Such an education bore its natural fruit! Nicholas became sly and suspected all his entourage—even his most intimate friends—of plotting against him.

In his youth Nicholas II. worked hard and, being capable by nature, his instruction should have left nothing to be desired. But his sole pleasure consisted in frequenting the officer messes and casinos and very often he spent whole nights in such places, drinking heavily and listening to the songs of Bohemian minstrels.

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This sort of existence was obviously not good training for the Sovereign-to-be. In military circles he was, very naturally, the centre of adulation and flattery. Little by little he became very vain, which when taken in conjunction with his natural weakness of character, was certain to cause trouble in the future.

At the time of his accession, Nicholas II., then, was not a man of very complex character. He certainly did not lack intelligence and had a natural kindness of heart; but, on the other hand, his father had utterly crushed his will-power and General Danilovitch had impregnated him with hypocrisy and a general suspicion of humanity; in addition his mother had encouraged in him a lack of decision in every act which became the tragedy of his entire existence. Very often during his reign he tried to emulate his father, but in vain. He was his father's antithesis—even in physique—and could not impress his personality upon the masses.

In his personal relations Nicholas II. was delightful; he had the rare gift of picking out at first glance the most sympathetic chords in the nature of those who came near him and he never failed to play upon these most successfully. The German Emperor—William II.—experienced this on more than one occasion. Nicholas II. had a really extraordinary method of almost hypnotizing those with whom he talked; he became exceedingly suave, seeming to interest himself eagerly in that which was being said to him, and always agreed with the speaker no matter what ideas were set forth. Moreover, being gifted, as are all the Romanoffs, with a prodigious memory, he would address to the person speaking to him remarks concerning his or her intimate life and circumstances therein, which never failed to flatter and charm. In his heart of hearts he was an autocrat, but lacking either will-

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power or decision, he had recourse to cunning in order to make his authority felt or respected. When he was displeased with any minister, he never had the courage to tell him so frankly and far less had he the courage to dismiss him personally. On the contrary, he surrounded the already condemned minister with all sorts of friendly kindnesses and marks of esteem. After such an audience, the minister naturally would return to his home delighted at his seeming favour and believing himself to be more favoured than ever by his Imperial Master. Very often, however, that same night would arrive a notification dismissing him from office.

On one occasion Count Witte, then Minister of Finance, not being in agreement with his master, resigned. Nicholas would not hear of it and assured Count Witte of his great esteem and confidence. Count Witte therefore withdrew his resignation and left the audience in triumph. In the ante-room he found M. de Pleske—Director-in-Chief of the State Bank, and hence his subordinate—and asked him the reason for his visit to the palace. Pleske replied that he knew nothing about it, but that he had been commanded by the Emperor himself. The next day Pleske was made Minister of Finance in Witte's place.

That was just like Nicholas II. Sometimes, in order to avoid painful scenes, he dismissed his ministers by telegram. Thus, for instance, the elder Goremikine, in 1897, then Minister of the Interior, and in Europe on a two weeks' holiday, learned of his dismissal by an Imperial telegram handed to him by the station master at the Russian Frontier, as he was on his way back to his post.

In his own family circle Nicholas was faithful only to himself and to those things he deemed essential to his own benefit. But even here he was ever irresolute. His brother, the Grand Duke Michael, and his uncle,



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the Grand Duke Paul, having against his will contracted morganatic marriages, he dismissed them from the army and deprived them of their titles and their incomes as Grand Dukes of the Imperial Family. But, shortly afterwards, he reinstated them in their positions and gave titles to their wives.

During his reign the dissolution of family ties in Imperial circles became more and more pronounced. The ex-mistress of the Emperor—the dancer Khesinskaya—became the mistress of his uncle, the Grand Duke Sergius, and had, at the same time, as her lover the Emperor's cousin the Grand Duke Andrew. In the ex-favourite's residence a game of the Devil's own poker was played. Grand dukes rubbed shoulders with a crowd of interlopers and ne'er-do-wells, with women of ill repute and business men of the worst character and reputation. Orders for war material, railway concessions and many other matters of like character were there talked over and contracted for. The Grand Dukes haunted the cabarets and were seen everywhere in public with the most notorious and profligate women of the demi-monde and underworld. Nicholas II. tolerated these hideous excesses, and members of the Imperial family who thus disgraced themselves were allowed to retain their high military posts and extensive commands. It is true that, at the end of his reign, the Grand Dukes lost their influence with Nicholas, but this was chiefly due to their being involved in the death of Rasputin.

With his Ministers the Emperor made use of a system peculiar to himself, based on the principle: "*Divide et impera.*" When Count Witte, a strong Liberal, was made President of the Council in the first Cabinet (so-called Constitutional), the Emperor gave him as Minister of the Interior, M. Dournovo, the avowed and bitter enemy of Liberalism.

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When Stolypin reached power he was forced to accept as Minister of Finance, Count Kokovtsoff, his antithesis in every way. Even Gorev the elder, who more than any other minister possessed the Imperial confidence for more than a year, was unable to rid himself of several colleagues who were most annoying to him, as, for instance, the famous General Soukhomlinoff, Minister of War, who after the revolution was condemned to death for high treason. When Gorev finally succeeded in getting rid of these men he had to put up with statesmen in his cabinet who were in no way his own choice. Continual dissensions and quarrels were the result, greatly to the detriment of the government. Yet the success of the principle "Divide et impera" seemed to please the Imperial Couple greatly!

The Emperor was not only sly, but childish. He also insisted on keeping things secret which were ridiculously apparent. This trait he carried into the most trivial concerns of everyday life. Admiral Lomen, Chief A.D.C., attached to the Emperor's person, related the following incident to me.

The Imperial Couple were in residence at Livadia, in the Crimea, having left Petrograd in September for a few weeks only. They changed their minds, however, and stayed until December. The Christmas holidays were approaching and, as the Emperor and Empress were accustomed to giving small gifts to their entourage at Christmas, Count Fredericks, Minister of the Household, wished to know if the Imperial Couple intended to stay in the Crimea over Christmas, so as to be able to make the necessary arrangements for obtaining presents and other things necessary from the Capital. He tried in vain to get some sort of decisive answer from the Emperor and therefore asked Admiral Lomen to help him. The Admiral

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mentioned the matter to the Empress, who promised to speak to the Emperor about it. A few days later the Emperor meeting the Admiral said to him: "My dear Lomen, you have become very curious. You wish to know when we are leaving here, but I shall not tell you." In consequence, at the last minute, there being no time to obtain the presents from Petrograd, hurried purchases had to be made in the Crimea. Naturally, the only things available were objects of no value and of very doubtful taste.

Nicholas was the same in affairs of State; none of his ministers could boast that they really knew his mind. He changed it with extraordinary facility and reversed orders on the morrow that he had insisted upon the day before. For example, he declared himself in agreement with Count Witte, who was strongly opposed to the occupation of Port Arthur, and, at the same time, gave orders to Count Cassini, our Ambassador in Peking, to take up the matter with Li Hung Chang.

In 1906 the majority of the Privy Council declared itself against the dissolution of the Duma, and the Emperor readily acquiesced. Directly he was left alone with Goremikine, an advocate of dissolution, immediately upon leaving the Council Room, he ordered the Duma to be dissolved.

In his relations with his people, Nicholas missed many opportunities of making himself popular. The reason for this must be ascribed, at any rate in the beginning of his reign, to his modesty, which was akin to timidity, but latterly to his absolute indifference. I remember when a new cruiser was to be launched near Petrograd, the Emperor was present on board the yacht of the Minister of the Navy. When he returned a great crowd awaited him along the docks of the Neva, among them being a lot of young girls from a near-by boarding school—all of them daughters

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of officers—and a group of wounded soldiers and sailors from neighbouring hospitals who had come to salute the Emperor. When Nicholas appeared the crowds greeted him vociferously. The Emperor lighted a cigarette and passed them all with a careless and a very casual salute, and without paying the slightest attention whatsoever to the wounded men who had suffered and were still suffering for him.

At the time of the declaration of the Great War, an enormous crowd of about 300,000 people were kneeling before his Palace, at Petrograd, singing the National Hymn and cheering madly. Nicholas did not even then know how to make use of this remarkable proof of patriotic sentiment, and hardly three years later abdicated, carrying with him only the regrets of those who had tried to be of use to him and those who had used him.

Had Nicholas had the good fortune to have married a woman who would have seen and understood his weaknesses and faults and have tried at least to mitigate them, the fate which finally overtook him would very probably have been averted. Unhappily for him, he did not find such a helpmate in the Empress Alexandra. To be sure, she did not lack intelligence, but she carried her scepticism of everyone and everything and her doubt of humanity in general, even further than did General Danilovitch, ex-preceptor to the Emperor. She had a special gift of caricaturing everyone and in this way influenced her husband to a very marked degree. Born in a small German Court she brought with her to Russia its narrow customs and habits. She did not understand in the least the part she should play in an Empire so vast as Russia. Very autocratic by nature, she only seemed to understand that she was at the head of 180 millions of people; that fate had picked out for her a weakling of irresolute

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character for a husband and that she could, in consequence, govern Russia as best pleased her. She was, as has been said, thoroughly and essentially autocratic—even in her own family. She adored her only son with a fierce passion and was constantly in a state of terror about his health. Because of this she neglected his education and the young Prince—by nature very sturdy and capable—attained the age of thirteen years without having had a preceptor. *Fräulein Schneider*, a German governess, and *Derevenka*, a common sailor, looked after him. The Imperial Couple lived a most retired life, admitting no one to their intimacy but a few persons specially chosen by the Empress, who was not happy in her choice of friends. Among these I will cite the famous *Madame Wiroubova* and *General Voeikoff*. *Madame Wiroubova* was the daughter of a man named *Tanceff*, chief of the Imperial Chancellory, and was divorced from her husband, who had been a naval officer. She was narrow-minded, dishonourable and very tricky, and was one of the principal introducers to the Court of the infamous *Rasputin*. *General Voeikoff* was an “*Arriviste*” and nothing else! He sought to enrich himself through his proximity to and intimacy with the Imperial Couple. He had separated from his wife—who was the daughter of the Household Minister—and had the most detestable and disreputable reputation.

At the same time, the mystic nature the Empress had directly inherited from her mother was very apparent. Church after church was being built and nearly every year some new saint or other was discovered. The Empress, having become more orthodox than the orthodox, prayed for hours on end, but her prayers did not seem to satisfy her. She leaned strongly towards the supernatural and in consequence the Imperial Court was infested by all sorts of adventurers :

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spirit rappers, charlatans, quacks and other fraudulent impostors.

First there was a certain "Philip" who maintained that he was a re-embodied Spirit. He invoked the shade of Alexander III., who dictated his desires through "Philip." Knowing how the Emperor had been influenced by his father, "Philip" showed considerable perspicacity and ministers fell from grace without any apparent reason. One day, seeing matters were being carried too far, General de Hesse, Commandant of the Palace, a man of unimpeachable integrity and devoted to the Emperor, determined to put an end to them. He summoned Monsieur Ratchkovsky, Chief of the State Police (who held the same position under Alexander III.), and asked him to obtain details regarding the antecedents and personal history of "Philip." It was then proved that he was an ordinary petty criminal, having served a prison term in France. General de Hesse hastened to report this to the Emperor and as a result "Philip" was expelled; but then, presumably to maintain his authority, the Emperor dismissed Ratchkovsky and General de Hesse fell into disgrace. It would have been comic if the end had not been tragic.

After "Philip" there came many others and last of all as an anti-climax and fitting conclusion came Rasputin. He was a peasant of Tobolsk, in Siberia. His real name was Novich and he had had a very stormy youth. Hence his name "Rasputin," which means "libertine." He was reputed to have belonged to the sect known as "Chlisty," well known for its terribly depraved rites and customs. Suddenly a change occurred in him and he abandoned his family and his home and went on pilgrimages to holy places—Moscow, Kieff, Mt. Athos and even Jerusalem. When he returned to Russia he began to preach in the villages,

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his doctrine being the duty of personally' inflicted self-punishment and placing oneself above all temptations. He had a very strange way of applying his doctrine. He used to collect some of his women disciples and—after having undressed them—undress himself and bathe with them. In the bath he would read passages of the Scriptures to them. When the police learned of these rites, they forbade him holding any more of these “pious exercises” as he called them. Whilst travelling about Russia he met a monk by the name of Iliodor, who—quite unwittingly—was to become a personality in his sensational career. Iliodor had a certain reputation in Russia and had made himself known even at Court by his anti-Revolutionary and pro-Czarist opinions during the elections for the second Duma. He was supported by a Prince of the Church, Bishop Hermoguen. Iliodor interested Rasputin, who had helped him, and he presented Rasputin to the Bishop. The latter obtained an introduction for him to the Imperial Court. Madame Wiroubova became an enthusiastic disciple of his, and he made a very deep impression on the Empress.

I must admit that Rasputin was far from being a nonentity. Despite his manners of a Moujik (peasant), his filthy aspect, his quasi-frankness, he was very clever, crafty and subtle. It is said that he had hypnotic powers. Professor Sirotinine, Physician to the Imperial Court, assured me that Rasputin in his presence had by a few manipulations stopped a hemorrhage of the Grand Duke Alexis (Heir to the Throne), and therein lay the origin of Rasputin's special favour at Court with the Emperor and Empress. He had persuaded the Empress that, as long as he was an intimate in the palace, the young heir to the throne would be in no danger of ill-health or accidents. Fate seemed to lend truth to his statement. One day Count Kokovtsoff—

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then President of the Council of Ministers—had at last persuaded the Emperor of the necessity of banishing Rasputin's presence from the palace. Rasputin was ordered to leave Petrograd at once and to return to Tobolsk. The Empress was broken-hearted, but, for a wonder, Nicholas stuck to his guns. Hardly had Rasputin gone when the Czarevitch slipped in his bath and was seriously ill in consequence, remaining lame from that day to this. There was a terrible family scene and Nicholas had to retract his orders. Rasputin was recalled. It is generally rumoured in Russia, as well as abroad, that intimate relations existed between the Empress and Rasputin, but this is absolutely untrue. The Empress worshipped her son and looked upon Rasputin merely as his salvation. Furthermore she was attracted to this strange peasant by his seeming frankness—a virtue that she absolutely refused to recognize in any of the other members of her entourage. The Emperor never intervened again. He said: "I prefer *one Rasputin to ten hysterical fits of my wife.*"

I knew Rasputin personally, and he certainly was a nefarious character. On two different occasions I had conversations alone with him. He spoke always in the shortest way possible and his lynx-like eyes continually avoided looking straight into mine. He addressed me in the familiar peasant manner of "thee" and "thcu." "Yes, yes," said he to me, "I know that you would like to know all my doings at Court. Many tales are told of the Empress and me. I know this. It is infamous. Yesterday I went to see her. The poor little thing; she too is in need of being able to speak frankly with some one. She suffers much. I console her. I talk to her of God, and of us peasants and she becomes calm. Ah! it is but yesterday she went to sleep on my shoulder." And, after a few moments' silence, Rasputin began again: "I also saw



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Nicholas. "I took tea with him yesterday. He gave me an excellent sweet and personally filled my cup." Then, winking leeringly at me, he added: "Admit that you would very much like to know what we talked about? It did not concern politics. He has enough of them, poor man, from talking of them always with the others."

Rasputin was much interested to know if I would publish my conversation with him in the newspapers. He said to me: "I know journalists. They always write horrors about me. You must not."

From my conversation with Rasputin, I received chiefly the impression that he was undoubtedly very cunning and exceedingly able, and far from being frank, outspoken and debonair as he wished to appear. I was also struck with the fact that his power lay in the servility practised toward him by some of the high dignitaries, who fawned upon him in hopes of favour and to increase their influence at Court. Rasputin did not attempt to hide his contempt for them all and treated them as dirt beneath his feet. He wrote petitions to the various Ministers on small scraps of soiled paper, knowing full well that they bore the importance of Imperial orders, and insisted upon having his shoes and stockings taken off and replaced by ladies of the highest Russian society in Petrograd. He had the reputation of being venal. Personally I do not believe it. No one can prove that he ever accepted large sums of money; he contented himself with small gifts such as silken shirts, and a few bottles of the best liquors, of which he was very fond, and jewels of no great value. I believe rather that the large sums supposed to have been received by him really went into the pockets of his friends. He led the most dissolute life imaginable and was addicted to heavy drinking in company with women and girls of the streets and often spent whole

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nights in questionable restaurants listening to songs of the underworld, of whom he was very fond. When he was drunk—which was very often—he was dangerously garrulous about the part he played at Court. One day in a restaurant in Moscow, he went even further than usual. General Djoukovsky, Governor of Moscow, therefore arrested him and made an official report to the Emperor himself of the reasons for his action. The only result was the disgrace of Djoukovsky.

Of course the Empress had learned of the report of the Governor of Moscow. It would have been thought that the Empress, rigidly severe as she was in all moral matters, would not only raise no objections, but that on the contrary she would be the first to wish to get rid of Rasputin. That she did *not* is proof conclusive that only because of her firm conviction that Rasputin was absolutely necessary to her son's life, was he enabled to keep his position at Court—no matter what he did.

Rasputin's old protector—Bishop Hermoguen—having learned of his depraved ways of living, ordered him to disappear from Petrograd and to go to a distant monastery there to expiate his sins. This advice of course did not please Rasputin, who replied to it by an intrigue against his old friend the Bishop, which resulted in his losing his see and retiring to a monastery, which he did not leave until after the revolution. At the same time, Rasputin remembered the Monk Iliodor, and fearing he might expose him, took care not to overlook him again. Iliodor found himself suddenly persecuted and finally unfrocked on a false charge. He left Russia and went to Sweden, where he became a journalist.

Rasputin became more powerful than ever and did not hesitate to continue his vile way of living, doing as he pleased openly. Several plans were made to get rid of him, the ministers even daring to speak of

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them to the Emperor. But all in vain. The luckiest of them made no impression whatever on the obstinacy of the Emperor. The others, not so lucky, paid for their daring with the loss of their public careers. Finally, one of the innumerable Ministers of the Interior during the last days of Nicholas II., M. Khvostoff, decided to rid Russia of Rasputin by violence. A regular plot was organized with the assistance of the ex-Monk Ilidor—but it fell through at the last moment. M. Beletzky, the Assistant-Minister of the Interior, gave the secret away. Khvostoff fell and Rasputin's friends were backed by Beletzky, who became *persona gratis-sima* at Court. At last some of the Grand Dukes, mingling with all classes as they did, realized the grave danger of these abnormal conditions. They saw the abyss yawning at their feet. They, therefore, collectively addressed a signed letter to Nicholas, begging him to rid Russia of Rasputin. The answer of the Emperor was laconic: "I absolutely forbid any and all concerned to interfere in my private affairs." The answer was followed by the exile of the Grand Duke Nicholas-Michaelovitch, who was sent to his estates and forbidden to leave them.

It was then that the assassination of Rasputin was decided upon as a positive necessity.

The following details of his "Execution" were given to me by one who took part in it:

A few young people belonging to the most aristocratic circles of Petrograd, among them two members of the Imperial Family, cousins of the Emperor, the Grand Duke Dimitri and Duke Igor, met at the palace of Prince Yousoupoff. Rasputin was invited to the party. When he received the invitation, he at first refused it and only accepted when the young Prince Yousoupoff personally went to get him in his private car. There was an excellent supper and the party

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was superficially most hilarious. Many of the guests not in the plot were dead drunk. Rasputin, very drunk, began to dance as was his custom. At that moment the first shot was fired by the Prince Yousouppoff. Rasputin, wounded, attempted to escape and, as he was a very powerful man, a terrific struggle took place. Finally he was struck down. There were eleven men in the plot and they all set upon the fallen man, repeatedly stabbing him wherever they could get knives or daggers into his face and body. The horribly slashed and irreecognizable body was covered with Rasputin's great cape, bundled into a motor-car by three of the young men, and thrown into a canal outside Petrograd. The body was dragged out the next day. When the Empress heard the news she went into hysterics; she burst into violent weeping, screaming wildly: "They have killed our only friend." Dressed as a Sister of Charity and accompanied by Mme. Wiroubova she visited one of the public hospitals of the city where all that was left of Rasputin had been taken. She knelt beside the body and remained there a long time, praying.

The next morning the remains of "the only friend" were removed to the Imperial residence of Tsarskoe Selo and buried in a plot of ground belonging to Mme. Wiroubova. A church was immediately ordered to be built on the spot, with the altar placed exactly over Rasputin's grave. When the revolution broke out, however, the body was exhumed and sent to Tobolsk, where it was buried very simply in the village where Rasputin was born.

The Empress demanded that the assassins of Rasputin should be punished in an exemplary way; but in view of the delicacy of the situation, the Emperor contented himself with sending Duke Dimitri to our Army in Persia and Prince Yousouppoff—married to

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a grand duchess of Russia—he exiled to his estates, forbidding him to leave them.

Thus Russia was finally freed from a highly dangerous personality. A curious detail was told me by one of Rasputin's intimates afterwards. Rasputin, it seems, had always foreseen a tragic death for himself and had said: "If I die, it will mean the end of Czarism for ever."

Rasputin's power had lasted more than six years and, during this time, nominations to the highest posts in the Empire were made through his influence. The Chief of the Diocese of Petrograd, Pitirim, an adventurer pure and simple and a man of the most depraved morals, had attained the highest rank solely on account of his friendship with Rasputin. A monk, by name of Varnava—a peasant without any education whatsoever—on the same account was made an archbishop. The Procurator of the Holy Synod, M. de Sabler, was Rasputin's Master of the Chamber. Count Kokovtsoff, having refused to ask favours of Rasputin and having been instrumental in getting him exiled to Tobolsk, lost his position as President of the Council solely through an intrigue engineered by Rasputin. The nomination of Sturmer as premier was also Rasputin's work, as also was that of the famous Protopopoff as Minister of the Interior. The last-named finally provoked the revolution.

In domestic politics Rasputin always pretended to defend the rights of the peasant classes, but in his heart of hearts he was in sympathy with all violent and reactionary principles.

In foreign politics—for Rasputin even had his dirty fingers in that pie—he was against the present war and worked for peace.

As is obvious from the foregoing, Rasputin's tenure of power was solely due to the Empress. It was she who

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protected him, and who, for one reason or another, supported him against the wishes of the Russian people, taking advantage of the Emperor's characteristic weakness in this connection, as in all others.

Count Osten-Sacken, therefore, was quite right when he called the Empress "the Evil Fortune of Russia." She was the chief cause and author of the fall of the Romanoff dynasty.

At the beginning of the reign of Nicholas II. the Grand Dukes still had certain parts to play, being the Heads of Departments in some of the Administrative Bureaux. But, after a terrible verbal attack in the Duma by M. Goutchkoff, who was the first Minister of War after the revolution, the Grand Dukes—although maintaining their positions for a short time, to all intents and purposes lost them. Two of them, nevertheless, played prominent parts up to the very last days of the reign of Nicholas II. These were the Grand Dukes Michael and Nicholas. The latter,—son of the Field-Marshal of the Turkish War, had worked hard in the Military Academy and had the reputation of being a first-class cavalry officer. Brutal, and a hard drinker, he was by no means a favourite with the troops when he commanded the Imperial Guard in Petrograd. Nevertheless, when the Great War broke out, public opinion selected him almost unanimously as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and, notwithstanding his desire to put *himself* at its head, the Emperor agreed to the wishes of the people. Despite his past, the Grand Duke soon became the idol of the masses. He had great force of character, which pleased them, as they were weary of the feebleness and incessant indecision of the Emperor. His early triumphal march through Galicia added to his popularity. The Emperor became jealous of him, and after the great retreat of the Russian Army, dismissed the

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Grand Duke and took command himself. But the Grand Duke had not lost his popularity in the army, where it was perfectly well known that the ill-fortune of the Russian arms was not due to the Grand Duke, but to the treachery of the Minister of War and his intrigues. The Grand Duke Nicholas is, perhaps, the only member of the ex-Imperial family—with the exception of the Grand Duke Michael—who has not entirely lost a certain popularity with the masses and the army.

The Grand Duke Michael, only brother of the Emperor, ismorganatically married to a divorced lady, Wolfins by name, whose husband was the Grand Duke's most intimate friend in his regiment. Grand Duke Michael carefully ignored all matters of state, but people who knew him well gave him a character of the utmost loyalty and integrity, diametrically opposed to that of his brother. During the Great War he commanded a Caucasian Division, and it accomplished much. The dignified way in which he refused to accept the throne without the sanction of the people gained him their greatest respect. Nevertheless, it is doubtful even if a restoration took place—an extremely unlikely contingency—whether he could ascend the throne, as hismorganatic marriage is a serious obstacle to his becoming Emperor.

The unpopularity of the other Grand Dukes with the nation is so notorious that their fate is sealed. It seems as if the Romanoff dynasty really ended in the person of Alexander III.

## CHAPTER VI

### FOREIGN POLICY OF NICHOLAS II

#### Relations with William II. of Germany

TO review the foreign policy of Russia during the reign of Nicholas II. it is necessary to begin with our relations with Germany.

As has been explained already, the death of Alexander III. was a great relief to William II., Emperor of Germany. Feeling himself rid of this obstacle in his path, William hoped to revenge himself for imaginary humiliations in the past, and assume the rôle of protector and mentor to his successor. He relied upon the weakness of Nicholas II., but forgot the other characteristics of his flexible temperament. Moreover, the two Empresses having both come from small German Courts, were themselves in continual rivalry.

The first interview of Nicholas and William, in 1896, at Breslau, was a complete farce. A few days before the meeting a photograph of the two monarchs was circulated in Germany, it was said by order of Emperor William, which represented the German Sovereign as almost a head taller than the Russian—whereas they are about the same height. Nicholas was much displeased, and an order was given the Russian Embassy to buy the negative and, if possible, all prints in circulation. This was a bad beginning. At the military review at Breslau, Nicholas, following the usual custom, wore a Prussian uniform, with the Grand Cordon of the Prussian Black Eagle. William II. naturally appeared



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in Prussian uniform, but did *not* wear the Grand Cordon of the Russian Order of St. Andrew ; moreover, William continually spurred his horse so that Nicholas II. might not by any chance get ahead of him. All these seemingly trivial details did not escape the Russian Emperor, and as a result the *raison d'être* of the interview between the two Monarchs fell through completely. Nicholas went home feeling very bitter against his German neighbour, and this sentiment was stimulated by the influence of his mother and even of his wife, who, though she was a German, had a pronounced personal antipathy for William II.

A year after the meeting at Breslau, Nicholas went to Darmstadt and purposely went by a route which did not pass through Berlin. William, who had expected another meeting, to be held this time in his capital, was furious. He complained bitterly of the matter to the Grand Duke Michael, great-uncle of the Russian Emperor, who happened to be in Berlin at this time. William was even more explicit to the Count de Pahlen, Chargé d'Affaires during the absence of Count Osten-Sacken. He spoke heatedly and angrily of his relations with the Russian Sovereign, accusing him of rudeness in coming to Germany without paying his respects to him, and, carried away by his anger, went so far as to say : " Nikky is becoming impossible ! He smokes cigarettes, plays tennis all day at Darmstadt and calls that ruling his nation."

Count Pahlen reported this verbatim to Count Muravieff, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, who had accompanied the Russian Emperor to Darmstadt. He, in turn, told the Emperor. In consequence, Pahlen had to resign his post in disgrace, and relations between the two Sovereigns grew still less cordial.

The German Emperor realized he had gone too far. He promptly went to Darmstadt and radiated with

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amiability, not only toward the Emperor and Empress, but also towards the Count of Hesse, whom heretofore he could not bear.

On his part, Nicholas pretended complete ignorance of all that had happened at Berlin and was most courteous and agreeable, but the bad feeling between the two Monarchs was only venerated and was certain to show itself again at the first opportunity.

In the autumn of 1898 Nicholas again visited Darmstadt, having followed the same itinerary as before so as to avoid passing through Berlin. This time, the German Emperor insisted upon an official interview, and as Nicholas owed him a formal visit, he could not again avoid it. It was, therefore, decided that the Emperor and Empress should return to Petrograd via Potsdam, near Berlin, and stop over a few hours. This meeting turned out even worse than the previous one at Breslau. This time the greatest blame rested with Empress Alexandra.

Two weeks before the meeting of the Sovereigns, Princess Golitzine, Grand Mistress of the Russian Court, wrote to Countess Osten-Sacken, the wife of the Russian Ambassador in Berlin, asking if the German Court would wear mourning at the forthcoming meeting. The inquiry was somewhat strange. The Russian Court, as a matter of fact, was in mourning for the Grand Duke George,—brother of the Emperor,—but, as he had been dead for ten months, the mourning worn was purely a family affair and therefore not at all obligatory on the German Court. The Countess Osten-Sacken, however, mentioned the matter to the Countess Broekdorff, Grand Mistress of the German Court. The answer returned was incisive: "To receive the Empress of Russia the German Empress will wear her handsomest gown and also all her jewels."

Countess Osten-Sacken received from Princess

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Golitzine a second letter shortly after, stating that "The Empress Alexandra of Russia insists that the ladies of the Russian Embassy wear full mourning at the forthcoming meeting." The Countess in her answer to this communication "permitted herself to call attention to the fact that an order of this kind was somewhat contrary to diplomatic usage, following which,—in matters relating to official mourning—demanded that the customs of the Court to which the Embassy was accredited must be followed." The German Court had, it is true, ordered three weeks of official mourning after the Grand Duke's death, but these had elapsed many months previously. Countess Osten-Sacken expressed the fear that a Russian embassy in mourning would have a bad effect, but Empress Alexandra, stubborn as usual, would listen to no excuses or arguments.

In yet a third letter Princess Golitzine issued the order of the Empress to the ladies of the Embassy that they be dressed—"not in mourning, but in black." However, *décolleté* dresses and pearls were permitted as ornaments, as a concession.

The gala dinner was a rare spectacle. The Empress of Germany appeared in a flaring yellow dress with the gorgeous and famous ruby and diamond head dress of the Crown of Prussia. The Russian Empress, on the other hand, wore a severely plain, entirely black dress trimmed with *crêpe* and having no relieving colour at all. As ornaments she wore a single string of pearls alone. The ladies of our Embassy in their black dresses looked like splashes of ink in comparison with the dazzlingly brilliant costumes worn by the ladies in attendance on the German Empress.

The dinner was a sombre affair. Ordinarily very loquacious and gay, Emperor William did not say one word, merely lifting his glass at the last in a silent toast to his Imperial Guests.

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The departure of the Russian Emperor and Empress was arranged for 10 P.M. that night, and it poured with rain. According to custom the two Ambassadors preceded the Imperial Party to the station in order to receive them. To my great astonishment, the Empress Alexandra came to the station accompanied by Countess Brockdorff; the Empress of Germany was brilliantly conspicuous by her absence. She had excused herself for not going to the station on the ground that the Prince Royal of Sweden was coming to see her that same evening and she had to change her dress! The two Emperors followed later. I was standing near Count Osten-Sacken when Nicholas II. approached, and in consequence, plainly overheard his conversation. He certainly was by no means pleased, and did not attempt to hide or restrain his indignation. "What an impertinence," said he to the Ambassador. "The idea of allowing my wife to drive off with a Countess of God knows what! Imagine making such an excuse as the fact that she had to change her toilette." And he again repeated angrily: "What an impertinence."

It all seems very trivial, but it shows how trivialities affected the relations between the two sovereigns, and in consequence it was but natural that the conversations which had taken place between Prince von Bülow, the German Chancellor, and Count Muravieff, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, could not make up for the increased lack of cordiality between the two Emperors. This state of affairs was destined to have disastrous results. His *amour-propre* deeply wounded, Nicholas tried to annoy and hamper his German neighbour by every means in his power. Another seeming triviality is an excellent example of the character of the Monarchs.

The German Emperor having appointed himself a field-marshal of his army and belonging also to the

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Austro-Hungarian army, Emperor Francis Joseph sent an Archduke to present him with a baton as field-marshal of the Austro-Hungarian army. As he was also attached likewise to the Russian Armies with the rank of general, it was natural that he should also be created field-marshal of the Russian army—but the Russian Emperor only sent him by the person of Prince Engalitcheff, Military Attaché at Berlin, a pair of epaulettes with his rank inscribed thereon. The baton of field-marshal was forgotten by the Russian Emperor! William was furious. He hurried at once to our embassy and said to poor Count Osten-Sacken—who seemed ever fated to bear the blame of his master's caprices—"Monsieur l'Ambassador! Will you be so kind as to explain to me what rank I have in the Russian Army? I am a General with the epaulettes of Field-Marshal without possessing the insignia of that rank."

A few months after this Nicholas sent him the coveted baton, ornamented with especially magnificent diamonds. But the gift did not remove the unpleasant impression left in the German Emperor's mind.

Here is another instance: The Emperor William was Honorary Colonel of two Russian regiments, both of them Infantry. More than once he had expressed a desire to become Colonel of a Cavalry Regiment,—especially of Hussars. Count Osten-Sacken, as well as our Military Attaché at Berlin, made this desire known to the proper authorities in Petrograd, and shortly after Nicholas appointed the German Emperor Colonel in a Cavalry Regiment—but it was in a Regiment that had figured largely in history in the taking of Berlin during the Seven Years' War, when Prince Soltikoff, commanding the armies of the Empress Elizabeth, after having vanquished Frederick the Great at Kunersdorf, made his triumphal entry into the Prussian capital. This detail, small as it was, had a most unpleasant effect

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n the German Emperor, because he understood at once that the Russian Emperor intended it as a sneering insult.

On his side, Emperor William in his relations with the Russian Court gradually adopted a special system of his very own. He redoubled his amiable attentions towards the Russian Sovereigns, and named both the Emperor and Empress Honorary Colonels of the crack regiments of the Imperial Prussian Guards, but took his revenge in political fields. In these fields, provoked continually by the German Emperor, and ceaselessly annoyed, the Russian Emperor gave way on almost every occasion to his arrogant neighbour. Russia lost heavily in these exchanges. We followed an entirely erroneous and false line of reasoning where Germany was concerned. Providence had dealt us magnificent cards to play in the great game against the German Empire, which even then was in a continual state of antagonism to England. Realizing this and relying upon our alliance with France, we only had to exploit this unusually promising diplomatic situation and veer from one side to the other just as it suited us. We had only to follow the example of Prince Bismarck, who in his day had built his policies on Russo-English antagonisms. But Nicholas' character was not sufficiently *determined* to follow a consistent policy of any kind. In the first years of his reign he exasperated William II. by continually attacking and slighting his *amour-propre*, only later to make amends in the political field by making him all sorts of ridiculous concessions at his slightest request. Acquiring the habit of seeing Nicholas always ready to give way to him in the fields of diplomacy, the Emperor William naturally believed he could go to any lengths. It is clear that our relations with Germany under such conditions would eventually conclude with a rupture.

A few of the Russian statesmen tried to stop Nicholas



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following such a fatal policy. Count Witte and Count Osten-Sacken both did their utmost. But their efforts were in vain. Count Witte fell into disgrace and the activities of Count Osten-Sacken were reduced to smoothing over as much as possible the mistakes which were the direct result of the personal feeling between the two Emperors. If Count Witte had remained in power, it is more than probable that a rupture could have been avoided without any humiliation for Russia. Germany might not have dared plan her coup so deliberately.

One day after war had been declared Witte asked me : " Do you believe if I had remained at the head of the government and Count Osten-Sacken had been in Berlin that Germany would have dared to encourage Austria in her designs on Serbia ? "

Knowing the official mind of Berlin and the personal ascendancy Witte undoubtedly held over the German Emperor, I could only answer in the negative. Unfortunately Count Witte had lost his influence at the Russian Court and the cabinet at Petrograd continued its highly dangerous policy of continually giving way to Germany. In Count Witte's ways of power we had successfully resisted the Bagdad railway project, which had been designed to open oriental ports to Germany. We had obtained a large financial representation for ourselves and France in this enterprise. When Witte fell into disgrace, and Count Osten-Sacken, ill and tired out, was only a shadow of his former great self, M. Sazonoff, Minister of Foreign Affairs, promised Berlin to link Teheran with Bagdad by a railway to be built by Russia at her own expense ! Nothing of the fear of Russia which had existed in Berlin in the days of Alexander III. remained. The German statesmen spoke of us in the most cynical terms. For instance, M. von Miquel—the famous revolutionary of 1848 and the none the less famous Minister of Finance in Prussia



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—said to me personally : “ I do not at all agree with my Emperor on questions of our colonial policies. Our expansion along such lines needs a great commercial fleet, and that, in turn, would necessitate our having a very large war fleet adequately to protect it. I have expressed my fears to the Emperor that our present colonial policy can very well get us into serious and grave complications with England. Why, I asked the Emperor, hunt for colonies across the seas when we have so fine a one as Russia at our very doors ? ”

Such words prove how much ground we had lost in Berlin in a few years of not only essentially bad but also weak policies and diplomacy. The exploitation of Russia by our dear neighbour advanced with rapid strides. German factories absorbed most of the orders given for our military and naval necessities—to the great detriment of France, our Ally. When the slightest obstacle arose to Russian orders being placed in Germany, the Emperor William II. hastened unofficially to Russia to attend to it. In other words, he then played the part of a commercial traveller seeking to dispose of his wares. On these flying trips to the Russian court he would arrive laden with presents of toys for the Imperial children and compliments for everyone. He would then obtain what he wanted from Nicholas and disappear as suddenly as he had come. At the same time, as our military and naval forces were rapidly growing from day to day, thanks to the enormous orders placed in Europe, and especially in Germany, William began to seek means of paralysing our fast increasing powers. He found such means at last in the Far East. It has often been claimed in Germanophile circles in Russia that our war with Japan was due to the cunning of British diplomacy. This is a great calumny. Our war with Japan was due to the folly of a few of our statesmen and to adventurers, such as Bezobrazoff,

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who were grouped about them. But, if any *foreign* influence is to blame for the Russo-Japanese War, that influence, I do not hesitate to say, was the German Emperor's, first, last and all the time.

He very cleverly flattered the *amour-propre* and vanity of Nicholas II. and urged Russian extension in the Far East. About a year before the beginning of hostilities, while William was visiting our ex-Sovereign in the Gulf of Finland, he hoisted—on his departure—the signal: “The Admiral of the Atlantic salutes the Admiral of the Pacific.”

Our rupture with Japan throws a great deal of light on the policy and character of Nicholas II.

When our relations with the Empire of the Rising Sun became strained, thanks to the exploitations of the forests along the Yalu River (by the clique of Bezobrazoff—a new favourite of Nicholas), Prince Ito—a few months before the outbreak of the war—came to Petrograd. He was a strong advocate of an entente with Russia, but imposed certain conditions, especially in regard to Korea. He pleaded his cause in our official circles and found supporters in both Count Witte and Count Lamsdorff, who was then our Minister of Foreign Affairs. Prince Ito insisted principally upon the cessation of the activities of the Russian Company which was exploiting the Yalu River districts. He stated that two policies were open to Japan :

- (1) That of an Entente with Russia, and
- (2) That of an Alliance with England.

He added that he guaranteed an Entente with Russia on condition that Korean affairs between his country and ours were rearranged, as Japanese interests in Korea were being threatened by Bezobrazoff and his clique. Despite the efforts of Witte and Lamsdorff, the Bezobrazoff clique proved too strong. Prince Ito left Petrograd, as no one would listen to him, and went at once to

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London. Passing through Berlin he paid a special visit to Count Osten-Sacken and told him—evinced great emotion—of the non-results of his visit to Petrograd. As Prince Ito was to stay two days in Berlin, our Ambassador transmitted to Count Lamsdorff his conversation with the Japanese Statesman in the hope that the Imperial Government might, at the last moment, be prevented from making the fatal plunge. But Count Osten-Sacken's telegram was never even answered! The Emperor refused to make up his mind. Bamboozled by the German Emperor, he believed Japan would never dare fight Russia.

Prince Ito, therefore, continued on his way to London, where the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was then and there concluded.

When, finally, our relations with Japan passed from bad to worse, the German Emperor made a great point—and in great haste—of warning our Ambassador in Berlin that, although he would maintain his neutrality in case of a Russo-Japanese war, Russia could absolutely rely upon the friendly support in every way of Germany! The Emperor said among other things, "I constitute myself herewith your Guardian of the West." It is said that Count Witte asked at the time: "Against whom will he guard us on the West?" When finally war was declared, the German Emperor, as a matter of fact, did not cease from overwhelming us with his attentions; his actions even had a bad effect in Tokyo.

At the same time, presumably following the adage of making hay while the sun shone, the German Emperor affirmed through his diplomatic representative at Petrograd that it was thanks to his personal efforts Austro-Hungary had not profited by the opportunity created by our Far Eastern complications. The German Emperor had his plans carefully laid and made us pay *heavily* for his more than academic support by a

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commercial treaty which was disastrous to us, so that, through this war, our industries were at the mercy of the German factories—our fleet was destroyed and our military forces paralysed for many years to come.

Such was the German Emperor's game—and, it must be admitted, he played it well.

Later, the German Emperor made great use of the situation thus created in his Morocco policy towards France, of which I shall speak fully later on.

After the conclusion of our war with Japan, serious troubles—as is well known—burst out in Russia. Out of these the Emperor William made capital so as again to have a close understanding with Nicholas; he even offered the use of the German Fleet in case the revolution in Russia assumed dangerous proportions, and went so far as to offer a German battleship to Nicholas, in case he should wish to leave Russia.

Personally speaking, this idea of an alliance with Russia was nothing new to me. When I was Secretary at our Embassy in Berlin, despite the chilly relations which existed between the two Monarchs, the Emperor William had the idea firmly fixed in his mind and was convinced of its value. This is proven by the following incident:

One day the Emperor William arrived at our Embassy in a great state of excitement. He had again been wounded in his *amour-propre* by Nicholas. He complained of the Russian Emperor, talking rapidly and loudly, as was usual with him under such circumstances, and getting more and more mixed up in the things he said. He finished by making threats against Russia. Accustomed, however, to similar outbreaks, Count Osten-Sacken remained perfectly calm and did not reply. When William came to the end of his tirade, completely out of breath, he shouted:

“Well, have you nothing to say?”

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And Count Osten-Sacken answered :

" Absolutely nothing, Sire. All that you have said you cannot do, and you know it as well as I do."

" But, Osten-Sacken," snapped the Emperor, " you forget that I have my Alliance." (Referring to his alliance with Austro-Hungary and Italy.)

" Well, what about your Alliance ? " returned Osten-Sacken, smiling. " Do you really know, Sire, of what your Alliance consists ? It is an Alliance of a force with a weakness and an inconsequential thing."

Startled by this retort, William paced up and down the room several times without answering, then approaching Osten-Sacken suddenly he went very close to him and said :

" Very well, do *you* want an Alliance of two Powers ? "

Naturally he meant Russia and Germany and—also naturally—knowing full well that the interests of his Ally, Austro-Hungary, were opposed to those of Russia, he was ready to sacrifice Austro-Hungary *then and there*.

In his inner consciousness he was convinced that England, far more than France, was his greatest enemy with whom he might one day have to reckon.

It is to this conviction of the German Emperor that one must look for the reasons,—with the exception of economic interests,—after his efforts to obtain a very close alliance with Russia. Our *rapprochement* with England had been a staggering blow to him. Isvolsky, who was responsible for that *rapprochement*, was ever after William's detested *bête noire*. But he still hesitated—despite the Anglo-Russian entente—to show himself frankly hostile towards Russia. I am very sure that with cleverness Nicholas ought to have beaten William at his own game, but to do this the Russian Sovereign would have had to change his character entirely. Our foreign policies

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were made and changed from day to day without any definite programme, and our statesmen—chosen by Nicholas for this work—were none of them equal to the great delicacy of the situation and the magnitude of their duties. The same stupid procedure existed in all the other government departments in Russia. The gravest questions were answered in the morning, and these answers changed again by night.

After the Russo-Japanese War, Russia was face to face with the problem of rebuilding her destroyed Fleet. It was evident that it was especially important to do this quickly. A man named Zacharoff—Græco-Russian by birth, a French subject, very rich and the representative of the great English firm of Vickers Maxim in France, conceived a project for the rapid rebuilding of the Russian Fleet. This consisted in syndicating all our naval works in France and England, who would thus be responsible for the building of a considerable War Fleet for Russia in a space of from five to eight years. The Anglo-French Banks indicated on their part that they would furnish the necessary moneys at four and one-half per cent., which was to be repaid in fifty years. Monsieur Loubet, ex-President of France, was nominated as President of this dual syndicate. Through the intermediation of M. Gore-mikine, Zacharoff presented his project to Emperor Nicholas. The latter accepted in principle; warmly thanked Zacharoff and conferred a high Decoration upon him.

It was decided that on his next visit—then soon to occur—to France, the Emperor Nicholas would meet Loubet and arrange the final details of the combination. Owing to the susceptibilities of President Fallières, Loubet did not have an audience with Nicholas while he was at Compiègne on the occasion of his visit. A promise was, however, given to Loubet that he would

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be received by the Russian Emperor at Cowes, where Nicholas was going after his visit to France. But, probably because of the intrigues going on all this time in Petrograd among those who wished to see the new fleet built in Russia, in order to keep the vast amount of money thus expended in the country, Nicholas changed his mind as usual, and the interview with Loubet at Cowes never took place. All the plans made by Zacharoff were thrown aside and went for nothing.

During the whole reign of Nicholas, minister succeeded minister to posts of responsibility with bewildering rapidity. The Russian Emperor had *nine* Ministers of Foreign Affairs during his reign, and fifteen, or more, Ministers of the Interior. In the latter part of his reign especially, the Ministerial portfolios had become veritable political "killing" places. Ministers were placed in power for no reason known to any one and dismissed in the same manner. For instance, Monsieur de Sturmer—who had never known of or had anything to do with the foreign policies of Russia—was suddenly made Minister of Foreign Affairs—only to be dismissed a few months later.

There were in the Ministry of the Interior men like Maklakoff (not to be confused with the Ambassador appointed to Paris, January, 1918), who was appointed solely because his manners had pleased the Emperor while this latter was travelling with him, and who remained several years in office, much against public opinion and the open hostility of the Duma, because he amused the Emperor's children and made the Empress laugh!

In the nominations of ministers their own political ideas played no part whatsoever! Unfortunately it must be confessed that the greater number of Nicholas' Ministers were "Arrivistes," that is to say, men

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who thought only of gaining a public career, and to whom a consistent policy meant nothing at all. Their sole idea was to follow the caprices of their master's mind. Under the circumstances, it was perhaps natural.

The relationship between the Court and the Duma—or Parliament—left much to be desired. The famous constitutional manifesto of October, 1905, which had instituted the Duma, was grudgingly made by the Emperor, extorted from him—indeed almost forced from him by Count Witte at the time of the first outbreak of the first revolutionary movement. For this he never forgave Count Witte.

From that time Nicholas continually nagged at the Clauses of this Manifesto. When the Duma opposed him in any way, it was dismissed at once and with extraordinary facility. Before the dissolution of the first Duma, the situation had been carefully thought over before any steps were taken. Later, however, and especially during the present war, to dissolve the Duma was mere child's play.

Finally, there was nothing at all left of the famous Manifesto! The only article of the Constitution which remained in force was No. 84, which gave all customs duties to the Crown in case of dissensions with the Duma—or during its holidays; and enabled the Crown to govern the Empire under what was known as the twelve provisions. Advantage was taken of this article 84, which chiefly concerned the budget, to govern the nation autocratically.

Besides the influence over Nicholas II. held by the Empress Alexandra, which degenerated into *omnipotency* during the last twelve years of his reign, the Russian Emperor was inclined to listen to the advice of the courts of Darmstadt and Coburg, and, at the beginning of his reign, to that of Denmark. The in-



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fluences of these three Courts played an important part in our relations with Germany.

Nicholas II. was very affectionate in his relations with his relatives at Darmstadt and Coburg. These relatives cordially detested the Emperor of Germany, who returned their sentiments in kind and regarded them with doubt and suspicion. The representatives of these two Courts amused themselves by underlining and emphasizing the ridiculous sides of William's character. These petty tricks were not unwelcome to Nicholas II., whose own character was flexible and unstable and who himself greatly enjoyed teasing and annoying others.

His influence had ceased at the Danish court on the death of his grandmother, Queen Louise. This old Sovereign, the "Mother of Kings," as she was always known, had a very powerful personality and character and cordially detested Germany and its ruler in every fibre of her being. She never forgave Prussia for despoiling Denmark of Schleswig-Holstein in 1864. William knew this, but could do nothing to remedy it. When he learned of the death of the old Queen, he came to our Embassy in Berlin and said to Count Osten-Sacken: "Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, I extend my most profound condolences." Then he added: "Now that I have fulfilled my official duty, you surely do not expect me to cry about it, do you?"

To sum up, when he came to the throne of Russia Nicholas II. had all the gifts necessary to become a *great* Sovereign. His weak character, his lackadaisical manner of attending to affairs, combined with the disastrous influence of the Empress Alexandra, had as their direct and fatal result the fall of the Romanoff Dynasty, and led to the state of anarchy in which Russia afterwards wallowed.

## CHAPTER VII

### RUSSIAN DIPLOMATS AND THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE DURING THE REIGN OF NICHOLAS II.

**D**URING the twenty years of his reign, Nicholas II. appointed the following Foreign Ministers :

1. Monsieur de Giers .....1894-1895
2. Prince Lobanoff-Rostowsky .....1895-1897
3. Count Muravieff .....1897-1901
4. Count Lamsdorff .....1901-1906
5. Monsieur Isvolsky .....1906-1909
6. Monsieur Sazonoff .....1909-1916
7. Monsieur Sturmer .....1916-1917
8. Monsieur Pokrovsky .....1917-28th Feb. 1917

To this list must be added two diplomats, Monsieur Chichkine and Monsieur Neratoff, who directed Foreign Affairs for a certain time, the former after the death of Prince Lobanoff, and the latter during the incumbency of Sazonoff, while the Minister was ill for a year. The frequent change of ministers was not caused by any change in the foreign policy of the Empire, for, fundamentally, Nicholas II. himself pretended to be the foundation of Russia's diplomacy. The changes were due either on account of the death of the minister, as in the case of Prince Lobanoff and Count Muravieff, or to intrigues at Court.

Monsieur de Giers had been Assistant Minister to the famous Prince Gortchakoff, the last man who held the title of Chancellor in the Russian Empire in the closing years of the reign of Emperor Alexander II.,

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who died in 1881. After Gortchakoff's death in 1883, when I entered the diplomatic service of my country, Monsieur de Giers was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs by Alexander III. He held that office during the whole reign of that Monarch, and Nicholas inherited him from his father.

Monsieur de Giers essentially belonged to the old Diplomatic School of Europe of the nineteenth century. An accomplished stylist, he was a supporter of the old methods when all matters relating to foreign policies were exclusively attended to by the diplomatic chancelleries of Europe, the work of which was most carefully hidden in the archives of the official residences. He was thoroughly impregnated with the political ideas which predominated during the reign of Alexander II. The alliance of the three Emperors, Russia, Germany, Austria, formed his political creed. He founded his policy on that of Metternich, and entertained a passion for Prince Bismarck, being very proud of the friendship which existed between the great German statesman and himself. He accepted the Russian entente with France with ill grace, as it was against his own wishes, hopes and convictions. He feared future complications, and his entire diplomatic activities had ever centred in endeavouring to avoid any changes which might bring about the complications he dreaded.

I have remarked that his whole political system was based on the motto of the Duchess of Offenbach—"Above all, no scandal in my beautiful castle" ("*Sur-tout, pas de scandale dans mon beau Château!*"), but it would be unfair to leave the impression that Monsieur de Giers was a man of little mental calibre and capability. On the contrary, he was very subtle and clever. While I was at the Russian Embassy in Berlin I was able to study him carefully, through his correspondence with

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our Ambassadors. In this mass of diplomatic correspondence, all of a very confidential nature, Monsieur de Giers very often revealed himself as a Statesman. His successors would have done well to study carefully his letters, as they would have found therein many useful hints and ideas, together with many profound reflections, of which they could have made good use. Of course, during the reign of Alexander III.—an autocrat par excellence—Monsieur de Giers to a certain extent filled the position of his especially chosen private secretary. He had a certain influence with his Sovereign, who honoured him with his esteem. But in all matters relating to Foreign Affairs, Monsieur de Giers instructed the younger men in the diplomatic service on the same general principles as were laid down by Prince Gortchakoff. Such instruction naturally proved useless in the face of modern conditions, and Russian diplomacy suffered accordingly. Unfortunately the evil effects of this system have not been eradicated even to the present day.

In order to be a good diplomat, it was necessary to be thoroughly conversant with the French language and know how to use it, and to join the diplomatic service it was necessary, of course, to pass certain examinations. These, however, were only a comedy. The examiners were heads of bureaux in various departments of the Ministry and, for the most part, having grown grey in the service, they had for many years completely forgotten the details of the knowledge which was required of the younger men, such for example, as a working knowledge of history, geography, statistics and political economy. By custom the fate of those facing this examination had already been decided before they filled in their papers with their answers. One might be a veritable well of information and yet not be accepted ; or be a complete ignoramus,

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and yet succeed in entering the diplomatic service. Intrigue was the main influence in the examiner's choice of a future Talleyrand. A word from this or that Grand Duchess had great effect.

The nucleus of the diplomatic service was the Chancellory of the Foreign Minister in person—Monsieur de Giers called it his "Guard." As I was a member of this chancellory I can explain of what it really consisted. There was nothing done there but calculations and copying work, and woe betide the young man who dared show any desire of further instructing himself by studying diplomatic papers! One day, in the autumn of 1885, I remember wishing to study Bulgarian affairs more closely, as they were at that time in a very chaotic condition. I was prevented from doing so and earned the reputation of being a man who needed watching! On another occasion, the Chief of the Chancellory—Prince Obolensky—to whom I said I did not understand the gist of a dispatch that I had been instructed to translate into the secret code, answered sharply: "This is as it should be. You must please remember that the best Secretary is he who understands nothing. You will succeed if you profit by this hint!"

It is, therefore, not astonishing that such a school contributed very little to the formation of a brilliant Russian diplomatic corps. The young men in this profession arrived at foreign posts without any knowledge whatever.

Furthermore, all appointments were made through patronage and with the help of friends at court. Our Embassies were thus filled with young men who might have done very well *at Court*, but who knew nothing of the basic principles of diplomacy. When Monsieur Isvolsky became foreign minister he tried to change this sorry state of affairs. A University diploma

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became essential before an aspirant could hope to attain any position in the foreign ministry. But intrigue prospered even more than before, for Isvolsky lent himself to intrigues of all kinds.

Prince Lobanoff had a very strong character, but even he had to allow for court intrigue. When he informed me of his decision to send me to Berlin, he said : " Above all things, do not mention your appointment before it is officially *published*. Spokes might yet be placed in my wheel if you do."

As the health of Monsieur de Giers was very poor, he surrounded himself with men weaker than himself who could not be used to replace him. When finally he resigned, his successor, Prince Lobanoff, found only a lot of nonentities in the chancellory.

Prince Lobanoff did not resemble Monsieur de Giers in the least ; he was firm, resolute and authoritative and had behind him a long diplomatic career. He had been Ambassador in Constantinople, London and Vienna. At the last place he stayed seventeen years. He was at the zenith of his power when he was seventy-five years old. There had, however, been an interregnum in his service when he was thirty-two and was Minister in Constantinople (at that time Russia had no Ambassador in Turkey). He there fell in love with the wife of a secretary of the French Legation, ran away with her and fled to Russia, without having asked for leave from the Minister of Foreign Affairs. A fine scandal promptly resulted. It was said that Prince Gortchakoff, at that time Chancellor, on learning of the affair and knowing that the object of Prince Lobanoff's love was ugly, shouted : " Could he find nothing better than that ? " Prince Lobanoff had to resign from the service. However, thanks to his personal relations, he was appointed Assistant Minister of the Interior, and remained in that post until his

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appointment as Ambassador to Constantinople during the reign of Alexander III.

Prince Lobanoff was an avowed enemy of Germany and had a pronounced personal antipathy towards the German Emperor William II. He dreamed of encircling the German Empire by an alliance between France, Russia and Austro-Hungary. In this scheme he had many supporters, all of them as convinced of its feasibility as himself. Before being appointed Foreign Minister, he was nominated as Ambassador to Berlin. The German political world was startled by his nomination, as his sentiments towards Germany were well known in Berlin, and it was an open secret that the Emperor William had accepted the appointment of the Prince very reluctantly. The resignation and death of M. de Giers, however, prevented Prince Lobanoff becoming Ambassador, as he was then appointed to the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The news of this burst like a bombshell in Germany. German politicians mentioned the name of Lobanoff in awed whispers, and, indeed, the strength of our new minister was soon visible. All Germany felt we had returned to the days of Alexander III., and Emperor William again became of little importance. At Constantinople, German policy revolved round that of Russia. At Vienna, where they had had the opportunity of studying the character of Prince Lobanoff, the diplomats kept quiet. In Paris,—the Prince was an ardent admirer of France—universal appreciation was expressed.

Prince Lobanoff first set to work to restore order in Balkan affairs. In Bulgaria, Prince Ferdinand of Coburg reigned, but was not recognized by the Powers with the exception of Austria. It was necessary to put an end to this abnormal condition. Lobanoff himself wanted Russia to recognize Ferdinand, but

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wished him to take the first step. He obtained the assistance of the famous Russian journalist, Tatitcheff—author of the *Histories of Alexander II. and Alexander III.*—who had at one time been secretary of our Embassy at Vienna. Tatitcheff went to Marienbad in Bohemia, where he met Prince Ferdinand, whom he knew intimately, and succeeded beyond all expectations. Ferdinand wrote an apologetic letter to the Emperor Nicholas, blaming himself for his previous policy of inaction and asking forgiveness. He promised that his son Boris should enter the Orthodox Church, and also from that time onwards to follow and maintain a policy agreeable to and conforming with the views of Russia. Nicholas then recognized Ferdinand as Prince of Bulgaria and consented to become the godfather of Prince Boris when he was baptized into the Orthodox Greek Church.

Russia thus won a diplomatic victory of considerable importance, and, despite the fact that this victory was a defeat for Austro-Hungary, Germany's ally, the cabinet at Berlin expressed itself as agreeable to Petrograd's policy. This was the first fruit of the moral ascendancy exercised by Prince Lobanoff over Germanic diplomacy.

It was Prince Lobanoff, among others, who advised Nicholas II. to begin his visits to allied and friendly countries by passing through Austro-Hungary. He did not wish, as yet, to encourage Emperor William by any great show of friendliness, and the latter had to be content with a visit paid, not to Berlin, but to Breslau, which was after an official visit had been paid to Austro-Hungary.

Had Prince Lobanoff lived, the interview, which has already been described, would certainly not have taken the turn it did, and the consequences would not have been so disastrous. But, unfortunately for



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Russia, Prince Lobanoff died very suddenly in the Imperial train while returning to Petrograd from Austria. The Empress Alexandra, as I was told by a witness, cried bitterly. As she had the reputation of being an out-and-out German, it seems curious she should have betrayed so deep an emotion at the death of a statesman who all his whole life had been absolutely hostile towards the land of her birth. I think the explanation lies in the fact I have previously mentioned, that while the Empress was essentially German, she was by no means a Prussian, and that she was very far from having her heart *completely filled with her Imperial husband*.

The death of Prince Lobanoff placed Nicholas II. in a cruelly embarrassing position. In a few days he was due at Breslau, and, knowing but very little of his diplomatic personnel, he did not know what to do, or whom to appoint as Lobanoff's successor. Finally the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Chichkine, had to accompany him. On arriving at Breslau and descending from the Imperial train, Chichkine ran to me, crying: "Dear Monsieur de Schelking, do not abandon me. I know nothing. I am lost!" Which were brave and promising words from a diplomat placed in such an important position!

Naturally, the German Emperor and his suite paid Chichkine every attention. This tickled his vanity to such an extent that he immediately concluded he would become Minister of Foreign Affairs. In conversation with Count Osten-Sacken he said: "Do you know, my dear Count, it seems that in Berlin they want me to succeed Lobanoff." When telling me later of this conversation, the Count added: "I can well believe the Germans would be overjoyed to see such a fool at the head of our Foreign Office!"

However, Chichkine fortunately never became our

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Foreign Minister. Count Muravieff succeeded Lobanoff. His appointment was wholly unexpected. The new Minister had occupied in former days, as official in the diplomatic service, many important posts. He had spent five years in Paris as first Secretary and had also been Councillor to the Embassy in Berlin for ten years, but he only held one post, as Minister to Denmark, in which no official was directly over him. This last post was of no great importance, as it was out of the path of high politics and the more serious affairs of Russian diplomacy. Muravieff had the reputation of being rather ignorant, having never graduated from a High School or University. From the archives of the Embassy at Berlin I was astonished to find that during his ten years as Councillor there he had only written three letters in his own handwriting, and these, written in French, were full of grammatical and constructional errors. On the other hand he had a good deal of common sense and extraordinary self-assurance, the last being his chief characteristic.

On his way to assume office in Petrograd he had to pass through Berlin. I never remember having seen a man happier than he was at that time. He radiated sunshine. In his delight he was eager to do everybody a kindness, and sent for each of us secretaries in turn and asked us our ambitions, saying he would see that our wishes were granted. Our Ambassador gave a banquet for him, to which came the chiefs of the diplomatic world of Berlin, with the Imperial Chancellor, Prince Hohenlohe, and Prince von Buelow at their head. It so happened that Count Muravieff's luggage had gone astray, and he had to appear at dinner in his travelling suit. He was not in the least embarrassed, and showed perfect confidence in himself and the impression he was going to make on our Ambassador's guests. In his conversation

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with Hohenlohe and Buelow he steered a very clever course, hiding his own ignorance of affairs and avoiding all dangerous subjects with consummate craft.

Diplomatic circles in Berlin were not displeased at his appointment. His good qualities and his weaknesses, which later Berlin proposed to exploit, were well known there. Emperor William, however, was *not* at all pleased. Count Muravieff, when Councillor in Berlin, always posed as a great admirer of the German Emperor, and the latter had shown him special favour. He had given him a large signed portrait of himself, and added some very flattering words over the signature. But William learnt later that Muravieff, while at Copenhagen—a Court which much disliked the German Emperor—had made fun of him to please his entourage. Ever after he was hostile to Muravieff.

As Minister of Foreign Affairs, Muravieff was faithful to but one person, and that was himself. He had little real personality, was very careless and remarkably trivial. How recklessly he treated the very serious problem of Kiao-Tschau has already been mentioned. In many other matters, just as serious, he acted in the same way. His sole preoccupation was to cling to his office as long as possible. He had known how to win the sympathies of Empress Alexandra by means small in themselves, but large in results. He used to play at being a horse on his hands and knees with the Imperial children, which with other similar tricks pleased the Imperial couple. As he fully appreciated the weak character of Nicholas II., he became a flatterer of the boldest kind in order to gain his own ends, and in his policies was usually most successful in guessing his Imperial Master's mind.

At this time the personal relations between the Russian and German Emperors were very strained. Instead of endeavouring to smooth over matters, Muravieff

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added fuel to the flames, and in consequence Russo-German relations became steadily worse and worse.

Realizing his own ignorance of diplomacy, Muravieff selected as his Assistant Minister Count Lamsdorff, who, having spent his whole life in the Foreign Office, was a regular mine of information. The archives contained nothing he did not know. Muravieff constantly consulted him, and he astonished the Emperor by his official reports, so great an understanding and intimate knowledge did they display of existing conditions and circumstances. Of course, he took very good care *not* to tell the Emperor that all his information was supplied by Lamsdorff.

The Russian Emperor could hardly have chosen a less profitable Foreign Minister. His own irresolution and weakness found no guiding and saving hand in the personality and powers of Count Muravieff, who during his tenure of office had no steady policy and no visible objective. His policy degenerated into a mere series of vacillations. His enemies worked hard to bring about his downfall, and had all but succeeded when he died very suddenly. His valet found him in his study lying on the floor with a gash in his temple, which had been caused by his head coming into contact with the sharp edge of a low stool when he fell. In Petrograd it was rumoured that he had committed suicide, being unable to bear the disgrace of dismissal which he knew was soon coming. Personally I do not believe this to be the case. As a young man Muravieff had been more than partial to women and wine and had sown a fine crop of wild oats. Despite his advancing years, he appeared to enjoy the harvest when he returned to Petrograd. He had a mistress whom he visited every day, and he used to drink a quart bottle of champagne every night before he went to bed. Such habits were not conducive to a long life, and probably

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too great satisfaction, rather than dissatisfaction, with himself carried him off.

Count Lamsdorff, who succeeded him, was absolutely his opposite in temperament and character. Nicholas II., The Unreliable, could always be relied upon to appoint Ministers whose characters and opinions had not the slightest resemblance to their predecessors. Thus Russian policies were continually chopping and changing. Although far better educated than Muravieff, and with an intensive knowledge of affairs of State, Lamsdorff was very narrow-minded and small of soul, and lacked the saving grace of Muravieff—common sense. He was a religious bigot. Women had never played any part in his life, and consequently rumour gave him the reputation of being a pervert. He lent colour to these rumours by showing great favouritism to some of the men about him, who were for the most part strikingly handsome *young* men.

At that time there was attached to the Chancery a very handsome young man, Savinsky by name, who held the minor position of Third Secretary. Lamsdorff noticed him and chose him as his travelling companion in the Crimea when the Emperor went to Livadia. Savinsky returned from this short voyage a Gentleman of the Chamber and Second Secretary. Only a few months later he was made First Secretary. Lamsdorff wished to make him Master of Ceremonies at Court, but found himself strongly opposed by Count Hendrikoff, then Grand Master of Ceremonies. Lamsdorff insisted! He went so far as to threaten to present his resignation to the Emperor in case his protégé was not appointed. As usual, Nicholas gave way and consented to Savinsky's appointment.

One day, at a gala performance in honour of the visit to Petrograd of the German Emperor, Savinsky fulfilled the duties of Master of Ceremonies. During

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one of the *entr'actes*, Emperor Nicholas, turning to Admiral Lomen, his aide-de-camp, who told me the story, said to him: "Point out Countess Lamsdorff to me." He meant Savinsky! The Emperor showed that he felt something was wrong, but this did not prevent him appointing Savinsky his Minister at Stockholm and, later, at Sofia, where he remained until the declaration of war.

Prior to his appointment as Foreign Minister, Lamsdorff had never been beyond the confines of Russia, not even on a pleasure trip. He visited Central Europe for the first time when he accompanied the Emperor to Compiègne, in France.

Lamsdorff was popularly known as a rubber cushion such as invalids use in an inflated form. He had been Secretary and Vice-Director of the Imperial Chancellory, under Prince Gortchakoff; later Director-in-Chief of the Chancellory; then First Councillor under de Giers and Prince Lobanoff, and finally Assistant Minister under Muravieff. The *régime* he instituted at the Ministry became paternal in its effects. He was surrounded by nonentities, but he was sure of them and had known them for many years.

In his policy, Count Lamsdorff—having been a great admirer of Monsieur de Giers—used his methods to avoid complications. While carefully keeping up the friendly feeling and intercourse which existed between Russia and France, he also did his best to better our relations with Germany. The result of his policy was apparent during the Russo-Japanese War. The Berlin Cabinet at that time surrounded us with favours, and Emperor William sealed this neoplatonic friendship with us by a commercial treaty which was disastrous to our industrial interests. Later he inveigled the Emperor Nicholas into the extraordinary secret treaty concluded at Björcke, which the Czar afterwards

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repudiated. This treaty when published by the Maximalists after the revolution caused quite a sensation.

Count Lamsdorff was frankly hostile to the war with Japan, and acted with great courage and honesty in this matter. He presented a long memorandum to the Emperor, later published by the famous Russian Revolutionary, Monsieur Bourtzeff. In this memorandum he called serious attention to the grave dangers of any policy which would provoke or annoy Japan, as the well-known Yalu River Company, with Monsieur Bezobrazoff, a new favourite of Emperor Nicholas's at that time, at its head, was doing. Count Lamsdorff concluded this memorandum by stating his open opposition to an anti-Japanese policy with almost brutal frankness, and threatening to resign if it were continued any further. Nicholas II. refused to accept his resignation and promised amendment, but the activities of the Yalu River Company in no way lessened, and the Russo-Japanese War was the result.

At first sight it seems strange that Count Lamsdorff gave proofs of such real statesmanship. The key to the puzzle is to be found in the reports which passed between Count Lamsdorff and Count Witte. The latter, whose greatness was so little appreciated by Nicholas II., was the originator of the policy of Lamsdorff, by whom he was constantly consulted. Lamsdorff had sufficient acumen to make himself Witte's mouthpiece, and the latter's fall was disastrous to Lamsdorff's calculations. The Emperor knew perfectly well of the two men's relations, and the credit with which the Foreign Minister thought he had covered himself suffered severely in consequence. Lamsdorff fell into disgrace and died soon after.

The Emperor's choice of his successor fell upon Monsieur Isvolsky.

Isvolsky had been Secretary of the Consulate at

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Philippopolis in Bulgaria; Secretary in Roumania, Washington and Copenhagen; and as Official Agent in Rome renewed the intimate relations between Russia and the Holy See, which had been severed for many years. He had also afterwards been our first representative at the Vatican, and then was Minister at Belgrade, Munich, Tokyo and Copenhagen. He had graduated from the Imperial Alexandre Lyceum, with honours, receiving a gold medal, and even at that time his comrades prophesied he would eventually become Minister of Foreign Affairs. He had always dreamed of obtaining the post of Ambassador to Berlin and intrigued a great deal to secure it, but though he failed in this he achieved the higher office as had been prophesied.

Incontestably very intelligent, with the very wide outlook and broad point of view of the real statesman, he had, however, two great faults: a limitless ambition and a snobbishness which amounted to a disease! In order to further his ambitions and his career he would hesitate at nothing.

When he was First Secretary in Roumania he fought a duel with a Roumanian officer, Lapteff by name. "A diplomat who fights is equal to a soldier who does not," Prince Gortchakoff had once said. This principle was always one of the rules of the Russian Foreign Office; but Isvolsky cleverly knew how to make use of the duel to further his interests. The cause of the duel had been a woman, but he let it be understood at Petrograd that, in reality, he had fought to defend the honour of his Imperial Master, who, he claimed, had been insulted by his adversary. His version was believed and he was created a Gentleman of the Chamber, and, as he could no longer remain in Bucharest because of this contretemps, he was transferred to Washington.



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Isvolsky only had a very small fortune of his own, and he spent the whole of it in the United States in order to make a good impression in Washington, Newport and Bar Harbour Society. All his friends made sure that he would marry an American heiress, but Isvolsky preferred to be transferred to Copenhagen, where he married Countess Toll, daughter of our Minister to Denmark, whose parents were very high in favour with Alexander III. The Emperor himself was one of the bride's witnesses, and on the day of his wedding Isvolsky was made Chamberlain.

For the honeymoon he chose a visit to Rome. He well knew of the existing state of affairs between Russia and the Pope, and hence decided to make a trip there to look into the matter—in a purely private and speculative way. From Rome he sent a long memorandum to the Foreign Office which was very much liked, and he was appointed, at first, Semi-Official Representative of Russia at the Pope's Court, and soon after, Minister-Resident to the Holy See. This was really the beginning of his fine career.

His snobbishness at least equalled his ambitions. A great name was a divine endowment in his eyes. Of an unpleasing physical appearance, he nevertheless thought himself irresistible where women were concerned. He also believed that after Bismarck he was the greatest diplomat in the world !

After having been Minister of Foreign Affairs, he was made Ambassador to Paris, and there had to receive the various members of a Republican government, which, to him, was torture. He preferred to associate with dukes and princes ; but, of course, his position as Ambassador necessitated his throwing open his drawing-rooms to powerful Republicans.

Monsieur Briand, who was then Minister of Justice before being made President of the Council, knew

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Isvolsky's weakness in this matter very well. For that reason he avoided all invitations to the Russian Embassy. When he became President of the Council, however, he could no longer refuse an invitation which was personally sent to him on one occasion by the Russian Ambassador. He went and was received by Madame Isvolsky, who said to him: "Monsieur Briand, it would seem that you have no pleasure in coming to us." Briand answered, "Oh, Madame, surely not as much in coming, as you have in asking me."

On another occasion when he was giving a fête to which all classes were asked and, of course, all the members of the French Government, the Russian Ambassador was particular that the Duke of Vendôme, a member of the Royal Family of France, should be present. This was not easy to accomplish, as the members of the French Royalty studiously avoid coming into any contact with the Republican Government representatives. Isvolsky therefore went to his British colleague, Sir F. Bertie, and the following conversation took place between the two diplomats:

"I want very much to have the Duke of Vendôme present at my reception," said Isvolsky.

"Well, why don't you ask him?" queried Sir Francis Bertie.

"What would you do were you in my place?" Isvolsky insisted.

"I wouldn't ask him at all," said the British Ambassador.

"But why then advise me to do so?"

"Because that sort of thing amuses you, whereas it bores me," replied the British Ambassador.

Many other anecdotes of a similar character floated about the Paris salons and were most annoying to our Ambassador, as they made him appear ridiculous.

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Isvolsky's snobbishness was so very apparent when he was Minister of Foreign Affairs, and, combined with his colossal self-assurance, made him follow a policy very dangerous for Russia. The annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (1908-09) undermined his position and was a striking example of his self-assurance.

In September, 1908, Isvolsky was taking a holiday abroad and was invited by Count Berchtold—Ambassador of Austro-Hungary at Petrograd—to come for some shooting to his castle at Buchlau, in Bohemia. Isvolsky accepted the invitation and there met Count Aerenthal, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austro-Hungary. Count Aerenthal had occupied for many years the post of Ambassador to Russia, and, very naturally, knew intimately our Minister of Foreign Affairs. Berchtold did things in a big way. Isvolsky was royally received at Buchlau. Knowing the tastes of his guest, a whole galaxy of lovely women were present, and it was there that was discussed the question of the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was to begin an era of complications in the Balkan Peninsula which had as their result the two Balkan Wars and—indirectly—*began the present world war.*

Isvolsky stayed at Buchlau from the 19th to the 22nd of September. On the 23rd of September the Minister was hunting in Austria with a friend, Prince Windischgractz, and on the 25th he arrived at Tegernsee, near Munich, where he owned a villa. I was at Tegernsee at this time, as I too owned a villa there, not far from his. On the 26th of September, Isvolsky, chancing to meet me while we were out walking, begged me to come and see him, saying: "I have a very serious matter to discuss with you."

At that time I was correspondent of the *Novoe Vremya* in Paris, and naturally hastened to comply with his invitation.

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Isvolsky made me his confidant on several matters of high importance, of which I took copious notes. He told me that Count Aerenthal had approached him with regard to the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austro-Hungary. The Austrian Minister had assured him that he personally was entirely against the annexation, which might entail grave complications, of which he was well aware. But, he added, the question would, nevertheless, in all probability, be discussed by the parliamentary meeting of delegates at Budapest in about ten days or two weeks' time. The Austro-Hungary Minister did not hide from Isvolsky that the delegates, "desirous of spreading sunshine about the last days of the old Emperor's life—so beloved all his life," might very well vote for the annexation under the circumstances. Finally Aerenthal had bluntly asked Isvolsky this question: "What would be said in Russia should the annexation become a *fait accompli*?"

Isvolsky told me he had answered: "It would most certainly be an ugly matter. Naturally we would not go to war about it, but would demand adequate compensations."

Our Minister then enumerated these compensations. They would include the declaration of the independence of Bulgaria; territorial concessions to Montenegro; an outlet for Serbia on the Adriatic, and, finally, a settlement of the questions relative to the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, in a way that would please Russia. Aerenthal promised his support, and once more emphasized the fact that he was personally against the annexation and that he would oppose it at the meeting of the delegates. Isvolsky then carefully explained to me his reasons for his answers to Aerenthal, and told me that we were not ready to open the Balkan question with all its ramifications, as great danger would

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arise were we to show ourselves unalterably opposed to the annexation.

"To protest it officially," he said, "we should have to be strong enough to uphold our protest by force, if necessary. A mere protestation might easily become a severe diplomatic defeat, and this I wish to avoid."

The Minister concluded by asking me to send a telegram to my newspaper, "to prepare Russian opinion for the eventuality of the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina."

I told him that it would be impossible for me to do this. "If," said I, "I should send my information in the form of a conversation that I had at Tegernsee with a Russian statesman, it would naturally be at once known that you must be the man, and that this would not accomplish your ends. On the other hand, were I to publish news of so grave a character without giving my source of information, my editors might very possibly withhold its publication."

I then proposed that he should make use of our official telegraphic bureau, and send a telegram containing the news he had just given me. He agreed to this, and the next day I submitted the telegram that I had drawn up overnight. He made a few changes at first, but afterwards rewrote it in his own hand. This message I personally sent to Berlin to my successor at the Russian Embassy, Monsieur Van der Vliet, asking him at the same time to hand it to Monsieur Markoff, the representative of our official telegraphs in Germany. In my letter, which went at the same time to Van der Vliet, I confidentially told him the source of this very grave information. The telegram I sent was published in all Russian papers, and reproduced in all the well-known European newspapers. It had the effect of a bomb, and unloosed a Russian press campaign of the most violent and bitter character.

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On the 27th of September I had another long interview with Isvolsky. I asked him if he could answer for the concurrence of the European Cabinets in the matter of the projected compensations.

Isvolsky seemed to be absolutely sure of the Cabinets of Rome, Paris and London. As for that of Berlin, he thought it would follow the diplomatic action of Austro-Hungary; and this was all arranged for between Aerenthal and himself.

Naturally, he had communicated with Aerenthal with regard to these negotiations, and had also given his own ideas to Emperor Nicholas. He proposed to the Emperor that he (Isvolsky) should go to Rome, Paris, London and Berlin to sound political sentiment in these capitals. The Czar accepted his proposal, and on the 29th of September Isvolsky started on his journey.

The King and Queen of Italy and their suite being at the time at Raconige, a castle of theirs near Turin, Isvolsky went there first. He was accompanied by Madame Isvolsky. The King and Queen greeted him warmly. He was given the Grand Cordon of St. Maurice and Lazare, and Madame Isvolsky was paid marked attention by the Queen. Very much gratified with his *pourparlers* with the Italian statesmen, Isvolsky left Italy and reached Paris the first of October, 1908.

That same day Monsieur Pichon, then Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris, in a conversation with Isvolsky regarding the annexation, said to him that according to reports he had received from the French representative in Sofia on the Balkan situation, the annexation was already an accomplished fact, in principle, and that it would be preceded by the announcement of Bulgarian independence; and that Prince Ferdinand would assume the title of Czar.

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Isvolsky would not believe it, although he too had similar reports to those of Monsieur Pichon, which had been sent to him by Monsieur Sementovsky, our Minister at Sofia.

For Isvolsky to admit these items of information were correct, was to admit his defeat at the hands of Aerenthal! Isvolsky's colossal self-esteem, always to the fore, would not permit any such thing, so he denied the truth of the reports, and tried to make himself believe that all was well. But he denied things that were self-evident to any one.

On the evening of October 1st he received a telegram from Sementovsky in Sofia, telling him that the Proclamation of Bulgarian Independence would be issued the next day! This news was confirmed by our Ambassador at Vienna, to whom Isvolsky frantically telegraphed, and the Ambassador added that the annexation would follow the proclamation, that is to say, within a very few days. And so it happened. On October 2nd Prince Ferdinand of Coburg proclaimed the Independence of Bulgaria, and assumed the title of Czar, and on the 4th October the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina was a *fait accompli*!

It is evident that Count Aerenthal completely and successfully duped Isvolsky at the Buchlau meeting. It is possible that the treaty between the Dual Monarchy and Bulgaria was made *after* Isvolsky's visit to Count Berchtold. Naturally, this treaty was projected long before this, but Count Aerenthal feared a rupture with Russia, knowing full well that Germany might possibly not uphold her ally, Austro-Hungary, as she was *not at all ready at that date to begin the European War* (October, 1908).

But Isvolsky, having imprudently assured Berlin that Russia would not make war, and would be content with adequate compensations, Aerenthal had abso-

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lutely a free hand. Furthermore, as Isvolsky had told him the compensations Russia would expect, Aerenthal, wishing to embroil his Russian colleague as deeply as possible, in order that he might have the least possible success, won a signal victory by hurrying on the Bulgarian Proclamation, with his Government's concurrence, and made it appear as if Austro-Hungary and not Russia had determined on Bulgarian independence of Turkey.

Bulgaria played Austro-Hungary's game by not referring the question to Russia, who up to that time had stood sponsor for Bulgaria in Europe. As to the other compensations demanded by Isvolsky, Aerenthal, once the annexation was accomplished, proposed to present them formally to the other foreign chancelleries, and this he did.

Of course Isvolsky was undone, and in a terrible rage. He decided, nevertheless, to continue his pour-parlers in Europe on the matter of compensations, as he thought the only thing left for him to do was to fight matters out to the bitter end.

The French Cabinet promised him its fullest support, but the great question was to win over the British Cabinet in the very delicate questions of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, and the Berlin Cabinet in the matter of Serbia and Montenegro, whose affairs were intimately connected with those of Germany's all, the Dual Monarchy.

Isvolsky therefore hastened to London to begin operations. He was received in the British capital with great cordiality, but when he touched upon the question of the Dardanelles, he was *quickly* told that this matter could not be hurriedly decided. He was assured, however, that in principle the British Cabinet had nothing against passing a resolution on the matter which would be favourable to Berlin, but that it would



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first be necessary to find out the status of public opinion in England. It seemed evident that the reply of the British Government was a refusal, disguised in polite terms.

From London Isvolsky intended to go to Berlin. He sent a telegram to Count Osten-Sacken asking him to advise with the German Emperor as to the possibility of his (Isvolsky's) seeing him.

I have referred to the fact that William did not like Isvolsky, and he decided that now was the favourable time to humiliate the Russian statesman. He knew perfectly well that Isvolsky had not succeeded in London, so he sent word to Isvolsky that he was very busy with the festivities attendant upon the marriage of his son, August Wilhelm, and asked him if he would come to Berlin *after* the ceremonies were over. The intention of the German Emperor to wound Isvolsky was evident, for, under normal circumstances, he would of course have invited our Foreign Minister to Berlin and the festivities.

Isvolsky went to Baden-Baden, and conforming to the Emperor's wishes, returned to Berlin a week later.

I was in the German capital at this time, and had been able to satisfy myself completely and accurately as to the sentiment in both official and public Germany. I knew perfectly well *how greatly German political circles feared a war then*. Aerenthal's startlingly brusque action has been severely condemned by all parties, and relief was only felt when it was known that Russia, too, did not wish for war, and that she would not provoke one.

It was only then that the German Foreign Office decided to press Austro-Hungary further into the matter, and at the same time, if possible, to force a diplomatic defeat on Russia. I knew Herr Stein, editor-in-chief of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, intimately, who

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was *persona gratissima* with Prince von Buelow. He confided to me that the Emperor would avoid discussing politics with Isvolsky. I did not hesitate to transmit this information at once to our Foreign Minister, who was very doubtful if it were correct. But it was true, for on the very day of Isvolsky's arrival in Berlin, he was asked to a family luncheon at the palace. The Emperor broached all sorts of subjects, *with the exception of the political situation of the day.*

Prince von Buelow later gave a banquet in honour of his Russian colleague, but he too avoided delicate questions, and refused to allow the conversation to impinge on political questions in the slightest way. Among those present at this dinner were the highest Court functionaries, and a veritable host of beautiful women. It was only at the last moment on the day of Isvolsky's departure that the German Chancellor came to see him to discuss politics. It was seven o'clock at night, and Isvolsky's train left at eleven. To his great disappointment, this interview did not at all satisfy our Minister of Foreign Affairs. When he began to speak of "compensations," Prince von Buelow said that Germany had nothing to do with the question, and that she was not interested, advising him at the same time to take up the matter directly with the Cabinet at Vienna.

Our Minister's defeat was complete !

On his return to Russia he fought the entire press, which had started a very vicious campaign against him. On the other hand he tried to continue the struggle against Aerenthal. Endless negotiations between them followed, to such an extent that Berlin decided to put a stop to them.

In the early part of March, 1909, Count Pourtales, the German Ambassador at Petrograd, came to see Isvolsky, and handed him a sort of ultimatum.

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Germany had had enough! Fearing complications, she demanded formally *that the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina be at once recognized by Russia without any reservations whatsoever.*

Isvolsky had to consent, and his discomfiture was complete. His snobbishness and his incredible egoism had ruined him.

In the salons of Petrograd he was given the sobriquet of "The Prince of the Bosphorus." In his conceit Isvolsky could not see that he was being mocked, accepting the nickname with pleased smiles. The Russian press continued its vitriolic attacks on him, and his many enemies did their utmost to undermine his position. His final disgrace was first and foremost due to the matter of the Bosnia-Herzegovina annexation, though his resignation did not, however, take place until a year later.

It would be unjust, however, to judge Isvolsky solely by the bad blunder he made in the Balkan question. Despite his faults he had without doubt the stuff in him of which statesmen are made. Persuaded as he was that our relations with Germany had undergone a serious change, he tried to replace them by other diplomatic combinations.

He undertook *pourparlers* with the London Cabinet on the Persian Question, which had always been the danger point in our relations with Great Britain.

In 1907 he concluded an understanding with the London Cabinet which had as its object the delimitation of the zones of Russo-Anglo influence in Persia, and, by so doing, paved the way for an eventual complete *rapprochement* with England. He followed this treaty by an entente with Japan, an entente the value of which proved itself thoroughly at the outbreak of the present world war.

Viscount Motono completed this understanding by

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his Treaty of 1916—which was published in January, 1918, by the Maximalists, and which made such a stir.

The foreign policy of the Russian Empire changed completely. Our relations with Germany were still correct, but the secular traditions which had existed between Petrograd and Berlin disappeared into the vistas of the past. We now swam openly in British waters. The Anglo-Franco-Russo entente took the place of the old Tri-Emperor Alliance. Isvolsky was the real founder of Russia's new policy, which was continued by his successor, Monsieur Sazonoff.

## CHAPTER VIII

SAZONOFF'S POLICY : RUSSIAN ACTION IN THE BALKANS.  
BULGARIA, SERBIA AND ROUMANIA. FOREIGN IN-  
FLUENCE ON RUSSIAN INTERNATIONAL POLICY.

FINDING himself attacked on all sides by the press, and by his enemies, and seeing the foundation of his power crumbling away under his feet, Isvolsky appointed Sazonoff Vice-Foreign Minister in the hope that he would secure the support and influence of Stolypin. But his hope proved vain. A few months later Isvolsky was made Ambassador to Paris, and Sazonoff became Foreign Minister.

Monsieur Sazonoff thus owed his career partly to Isvolsky, whose secretary he had been at the Holy See in Rome, and partly to the fact that he had married the sister of Mme. Stolypin, when Stolypin was President of the Ministerial Council and omnipotent in the Empire.

I knew Sazonoff intimately. He had been my colleague in the Foreign Office, where our desks were opposite each other. We had both been appointed Imperial Chamberlains in the same year, and made our début at the Court at the same time in March, 1898, at Moscow, during the Imperial visit to the old capital.

The new Minister of Foreign Affairs—although not nearly so intelligent as his predecessor—was by no means stupid. He was chiefly handicapped by lack

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of experience. His whole experience had been gained in London and at the Holy See, and included only one appointment as a minister of Russia—that of Resident at the Papal Court.

As chief of the Foreign Office first he was modest, and showed himself eager to learn, allowing himself to be guided by his brother-in-law, Stolypin. But he gradually became stubborn and insisted on displaying his own abilities, especially after the assassination of Stolypin. His successes in the Duma completely spoiled him. The Liberal party gave him credit for being progressive, and when the war broke out the deputies, who, with but few exceptions, were not at all partial to our existing foreign policies, credited him also with our understanding with Great Britain, and with Italy. Each time that Sazonoff appeared in the Duma he was received with vociferous applause. This was the climax which completely turned his head. He believed himself to be another Talleyrand. In making decisions he refused to listen to any advice tendered by others, seeming to consider he was above criticism. Zinovieff the elder, our ex-Ambassador to Constantinople and a diplomat well known in all European capitals for his intelligence, said to me :

“I don't see Sazonoff any more. He does not talk over affairs these days ! He *decrees*.”

But notwithstanding his self-assurance, Sazonoff was quite amenable to the influence of the Foreign Ambassadors accredited to Petrograd.

Before the War, Sazonoff naturally endeavoured to carry on Isvolsky's policies—especially where England was concerned. But at the *same time* he was carefully watching Berlin, and shortly before the War he concluded with the Berlin Cabinet an entente regarding Persia, which, as I have already explained, was in my opinion very humiliating for Russia. He promised

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to link Teheran and Bagdad by rail at our expense! In this way we completely lost our influence in Persia. In the south our understanding with England gave the British a definite sphere of influence in the empire of the Shah, and in the north, where England had given us a similar sphere, Sazonoff by this railway allowed the Germans to penetrate.

But his lack of experience and his unfortunate self-confidence were still more apparent in his Balkan policy.

In the month of April, 1912, Serbia and Bulgaria concluded an offensive and defensive alliance. This treaty had been first submitted, and received Russia's sanction. It was obvious that this alliance had Turkey in view, and that war would ensue.

I was then in the Balkans as special correspondent of my paper (*The Birpevia Wiedemosti*—the largest daily in Petrograd), and had stayed for several weeks in Belgrade. From my conversations with Prince Alexander, heir to the Serbian Throne, Monsieur Paschitch, President of the Serbian Council, and also with Monsieur de Hartwig, our Minister in Serbia, probably the best-informed men on the Balkan situation, I had gained the firm conviction that Serbia was at that moment ready for war, that this was quite understood and agreed to by Montenegro—and that Sofia was to give the signal which would precipitate war. Later, when I was in Bulgaria, my conviction was confirmed. I was perfectly certain war would break out very shortly. More than that, on the 24th of July, 1912, I sent a telegram to my paper in which I predicted that hostilities would begin about the end of September. This telegram was quoted everywhere at the time, and subsequent events proved I was right. On the 2nd of October, 1912 (modern style), the first shot was fired by Montenegro.

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I had exceptional means of information, because my brother-in-law (Sementowsky) had been Minister of Sofia for many years. He and his wife were very popular there, enjoying an exceptional position in political circles, and being very friendly with Czar Ferdinand. I also had met the Czar of Bulgaria before, and when I arrived in Sofia immediately called formally at the palace. Two hours later I was visited by Monsieur Dobrovitch, chief of the Czar's private information bureau, and his right-hand man. Dobrovitch welcomed me in his master's name, and added that Ferdinand wanted to see me, and would like to know how long I intended remaining in Sofia. Knowing my answer would be reported verbally to the Czar, and knowing his little idiosyncrasies, I answered :

"To have the great honour of being received by your Sovereign I have decided to stay in Sofia weeks, months, years, and to die here, if necessary."

Shortly afterwards, Dobrovitch visited me a second time. He told me that Ferdinand would receive me on the following day, but asked that our conversation should not be published in my paper. I insisted, however, and Dobrovitch sent me word in the evening that the Czar consented to the publication of an interview on the condition that it was first submitted to him as censor.

Ferdinand received me privately, and the Queen was the only one present at our interview, which lasted two and a half hours. The Czar was most agreeable, and recalled many circumstances of our previous meetings, spoke with seeming affection of Prince Lobanoff, of Nicholas II., of Count Osten-Sacken, and with his usual enthusiasm for science, art and music—in short, he touched upon all possible subjects of conversation with the exception of that which interested me the most, the political situation of the



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moment. It was only when I rose to make my adieu, that he said to me :

“ You have just come from Serbia,—what are your impressions ? ”

I answered that the eyes of the Serbians were fastened on the royal palace of Sofia, whence the word of command was expected. I added that it was sufficient to have talked with Prince Alexander, with Paschitch, and with Hartwig, to realize opinion in Belgrade. At Sofia, I continued, it was not so easy. I had there interviewed a dozen statesmen, all of whom were no doubt intelligent, but who all seemed to hold different points of view.

The Czar smiled, and turning to the Queen, said to her :

“ You hear what the Baron has said to us, Madame ! You and I, too, know something of these matters ! ” And he gesticulated as if he carried a heavy weight on his shoulders.

My interview with Czar Ferdinand and with his ministers confirmed the information I had gathered in Belgrade, and I reported accordingly to my paper. When the report was published M. Sazonoff was visiting European capitals. He was absolutely certain that war would not ensue, and so expressed himself strongly in Paris and London. In speaking of the new Balkan Allies he said :

“ They will never dare ! ”

When he reached Berlin he learned that war had been declared, and said to his intimates :

“ The hounds have slipped my leash.”

On his return to Petrograd I met him at the railway station Tsarskoe Selo, the residence of the Emperor, where we were both staying. Sazonoff asked me into his carriage to ride with him to Petrograd.

“ Where the devil did you get your information ? ” he asked abruptly.

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My answer greatly astonished him.

"From exactly the same source as you would have had it just as easily. More especially, of course, thanks to Hartwig. You, however, did not agree with Hartwig, and did not follow his line of reasoning, preferring to listen to the reports of Nekludoff (who had succeeded the late Sementovsky as the Russian Minister at Sofia). Naturally, as you did not want war, you only listened to those who were of the same opinion and desires."

It must be admitted that on the outbreak of hostilities Sazonoff knew how to get out—and keep out—of trouble.

Relying on our understanding with France, he succeeded in forcing Austro-Hungary to recognize two principles :

(1) The disinterestedness of the great European Powers in the war, and

(2) The non-limitation of the theatre of war in the Balkans.

Austro-Hungary evacuated the Sanjak of Novibazar, a Turkish Province she had militarily occupied since the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and thus permitted the Serbs to join with the Montenegrins.

It is certain that Germany, and especially Austro-Hungary, were convinced the Slavic Balkan Alliance would be crushed by Turkey, but when the victorious Serbs reached the shores of the Adriatic Vienna received a severe shock.

Count Berchtold, at that time Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, promptly proposed a conference of the Powers to discuss Balkan problems, and Sazonoff was weak enough to accept this proposal. The conference took place, and resulted in the evacuation by the Montenegrins of the city of Scutari, which they had occupied by force of arms ; the creation of Albania as an independent State, but naturally dependent on the Central Powers, with a German Prince

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(Prince Wied) as sovereign, and in the retirement from Durazzo on the Adriatic of the unfortunate Serbs. The Serbians retired—nay, were forced into Macedonia. Bulgaria shrieked “Treachery,” and a second Balkan war—this time between the Allies of the present day—broke out in 1913.

On one of my previous visits to the ex-Prime Minister of Russia, Monsieur Goremikine, the old statesman strongly criticized Sazonoff’s policy. He said to me :

“Why did he go to London at all? Had I been Minister of Foreign Affairs and had in my pocket the treaty with Austro-Hungary, which did not limit the theatre of war, and had been asked to a conference, I should have simply replied: ‘Gentlemen, let the Slavs and the Turks cut each other’s throats to their hearts’ content!’ and when they have had enough of this and they make a treaty of peace, there will be plenty of time to hand their treaty round the chancelleries of Europe.”

Count Witte, too, on his part did not hesitate to criticize Sazonoff’s work severely. Unfortunately Goremikine, through indolence, and Witte, through impotence, did not bring their respective points of view to the Czar’s attention. Thus Sazonoff remained master of the situation. Afraid of a second Balkan war and very desirous of preventing it, he persuaded the Emperor to intervene personally. This was a great mistake. The telegram of the Russian Emperor to the Kings of Serbia and Bulgaria gave no practical result, and Russian prestige in the Balkans was seriously damaged.

The second Balkan war was concluded by the Treaty of Bucharest in 1914. This treaty pleased no one, although I know that this is directly contrary to the opinion of my friend, M. André Cheradame, in his remarkable book, “The Pan-German Plot Unmasked.” Serbia, victorious, was very dissatisfied at not having

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obtained an outlet on the Adriatic. Greece did not receive all she hoped for in Macedonia. Roumania was not content with what she received in Dobroudja and felt she had been prevented by Russia from marching on Sofia. Bulgaria lost all round. The Bulgarians were furious with Russia because they believed Russia had forced Roumania to intervene. The Treaty of Bucharest was chiefly the work of Sazonoff. It was obviously an expedient which sowed a harvest sure to be ripe for reaping one day. Yet when the harvest came in the present world war, as far as the Balkan States were concerned Sazonoff pursued his old policies, blind to their consequences.

I am personally convinced that Sazonoff did not believe in the possibility of a European war which would develop into a world-wide war, and he impressed this belief both on France and England. They considered their interests in the Balkans small beside those of Russia, and naturally preferred to follow the lead of Sazonoff.

On the first of June, 1914, Emperor Nicholas had an interview with King Charles I. of Roumania, at Constanza. I was there at the time, and learned through Roumanian statesmen, and intimate friends of mine, that King Charles had made certain promises to Russia. For example, a military convention which had been in force between Austro-Hungary and Roumania for more than twenty years would not be renewed. Austro-Hungary, in consequence, lost a very strong support in the Balkans. Furthermore, when Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the throne of the Habsburgs, was assassinated at Serajevo, on the 28th of June, 1914, Sazonoff doubtless knew of the war-like arrangements the Archduke had concluded in his castle at Krobatin with the German Emperor,—yet as far as I could judge from my conversation with

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members of his entourage, he was convinced that if the Archduke were out of the way the peace of Europe would not be endangered. For my part, after I left Constanza I spent ten days in Bucharest, and then went to Budapest and Vienna. At both places I had interviews with Austro-Hungarian statesmen; as, for instance, Count Tisza, President of the Hungarian Council, and Count Forgach, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs in Austro-Hungary. Some of these interviews I sent to my paper in Petrograd, and in them, contrary to the opinion held by Sazonoff, I held strongly to the opinion that owing to the death of the Archduke the situation had become infinitely more serious.

Count Forgach—who had been a colleague of mine at Munich—was most explicit. He did not attempt to hide the rage he was in against the Serbians. He said that Serbia fully deserved the most drastic kind of a lesson, and added that Austro-Hungary would know how to inflict it! Coming from such a source, this was enough. Forgach was notorious as the forger of the Friedjung trial, and one who would take any steps to harm Serbia. He and the German Emperor's representative, Tchirsky, were hand in glove.

When I returned to Petrograd on the 2nd of July, 1914, I reported my impressions to Monsieur Neratoff, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs. I found him very sceptical regarding my forebodings, and as I knew that Neratoff was Sazonoff's *alter ego*, I realized that his views were those of the Foreign Minister himself, and that nothing would change them.

After the declaration of war the Duma met in solemn conclave. All the ministers of State and the foreign representatives of friendly allied Powers were received with wild enthusiasm. Sazonoff was unable to begin his speech for several minutes because of the cheering of the deputies, and he thought the cheering was in-

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tended as a personal tribute and as confirming the excellence of his policies.

It is apparent by simply examining a map which shows clearly the southern and eastern zones of the Great War, that the rôle Serbia would play in any such war was most important. Serbia lay as a barrier between Constantinople and the Central Powers, and her army of about 400,000 men, already victorious in the two Balkan wars, was a constant menace to Austro-Hungary. It should have been evident that the efforts of our diplomats in the Balkan Peninsula must concentrate themselves on efforts to help and use the Serbian forces as much as possible. It was, therefore, necessary to :

- (1) Force Greece to action,
- (2) Bring Roumania into the Alliance,
- (3) Either assure ourselves that Bulgaria would join us, or that, at least, she would remain neutral, and
- (4) To unite Italian military strategy with that of Serbia.

Unfortunately Russian Diplomacy lacked initiative, and drew the Allies into the same mischievous situation. Dynastic considerations were allowed to affect diplomatic and military action, and this unhealthy state of affairs was ultimately the cause of the Serbian disaster.

Greece in 1913 had concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with Serbia, which was primarily aimed at Bulgaria, but also had as an objective the possibility of a European war. It was stipulated in this treaty that if Serbia were attacked Greece would come to her assistance with all her military and naval forces.

King Constantine of Greece, who married a sister of the German Emperor, and who received his military education in Berlin, regarded his rank of a general in the Prussian Army nearly, if not quite, as reverently

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as he did his position as King of Greece. He was pro-German to his very marrow. He was whole-heartedly against an alliance of Greece with any powers inimical to Germany and German interests. Venizelos, the only great statesman and diplomat in Greece, to whom Greece owed the reacquisition of her former territory, and who was the author of the treaty with Serbia, had to resign. He was replaced by creatures nominated by the King, who falsely interpreted the treaty with Serbia, and confined Greece to a condition of neutrality entirely pro-German in its sentiments.

All diplomatic action of the Allies should have concentrated in an attempt to force an anti-Constantine movement—or uprising—in Athens. In Paris the true situation was realized. But as much cannot be said for the authorities either in London or in Petrograd. The King of Greece sent one of his brothers to England and another to Russia to plead his cause. Prince Christopher worked in London, and Prince Nicholas—married to a Grand Duchess of Russia,—did his best in Petrograd. They both used every possible argument regarding their dynastic interests, and both Sir Edward Grey and Sazonoff seem to have been blind to the real situation.

The islands of the Grecian Archipelago served regularly as bases for the revictualling and remuniting of German submarines.

A certain Baron Schenk, the German representative in Athens, became the centre of a web of spies spread over the whole Balkan Peninsula. Venizelos, whose life was in danger, had to leave Athens, and it was only after the massacre of French officers and sailors at Athens, which was inspired and abetted by the Royal Court itself, that allied diplomacy began to show some signs of energy!

King Constantine eventually was forced to leave

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the country, and his son Alexander was proclaimed King. Venizelos became Prime Minister again, and Greece—at last—made common cause with the Allies.

But it was too late! Serbia no longer existed!

The treaty which linked Serbia with Roumania, made in 1913, had expired automatically after the peace of Bucharest. But it was evident that Roumanian interests lay more with the Allies than with the Central Powers. Among the Provinces of Hungary was Transylvania, inhabited by five or six million Roumanians, and naturally Roumania—following a thoroughly nationalistic policy—would keep the annexation of Transylvania ever in view. But at the beginning of the war the throne of Roumania was still occupied by King Charles I., by birth and in his whole soul a Hohenzollern, who had linked the destinies of his country with those of the Central Powers. Despite this fact, through the pressure brought to bear on him by the majority of his people,—he had to denounce the military convention which he had concluded with Austro-Hungary in 1884. When the war broke out he held a Crown Council (August 2nd, 1914), and began by declaring that according to his convictions, Roumania should become an Ally of the Central Powers. But, as he said, in case the majority of the Council should not be in accord with such a policy, he was ready to follow a policy of the strictest neutrality. He added that this was his final concession, and that he would rather abdicate than act in any way against the Central Powers.

The meeting was a very turbulent one. The King found some support in Monsieur Carp, the ex-President of the Council, and a strong partisan of Germany, and also in the person of Monsieur Marghiloman, also an ex-President of the Council, who voted for neutrality. The true patriots, such men as the late N. Philippesco and M. Take Ionescu, demanded immediate action



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on the part of Roumania with the Allied Powers. Monsieur Bratiano, the leader of the Liberal Party, and the most powerful man in the country, who was President of the Council, played a double game. He declared for neutrality, as he did not wish to break with the King, but in a devious manner he let it be known to the partisans of the Allies that he was completely at one with their aspirations, and only awaited a favourable opportunity to force the King's hand and to follow a national policy. Thus, at the beginning of the war, Roumania preserved her neutrality.

But this neutrality was of a rather curious character ! The Roumanian Government did not oppose the revictualling and munitioning of Serbia by Russia. We had installed at Reni, on the Danube, and on the Roumanian frontier a special Military Commission, presided over by Admiral Vesselkine. The ships belonging to this Commission brought the munitions, equipment, and supplies down the Danube to the Serbians under the very eyes of the Roumanian authorities, but the latter deliberately turned their eyes another way ! At the same time the Central Powers were unostentatiously passing whole batteries of guns of heavy calibre, shells and cartridges by the million, aeroplanes in sections, rifles by the thousand, through Roumania, all destined for Bulgaria and Turkey !

German and Austrian officers were at complete liberty to come and go at will from Berlin and Vienna to Sofia and Constantinople. Furthermore, Roumania refitted and revictualled the Central Powers with wheat and other cereals, and to cap all, finally concluded a commercial treaty with them. By this treaty Roumania promised to supply Austro-Hungary and Germany with a certain quantity of wheat, other cereals, and petrol, in exchange for war materials wherewith to make war. This was "strict neutrality" with a vengeance !

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Russia several times tried to protest against the actions of Roumania in this matter ; each time Bratiano excused himself and assured the Cabinet at Petrograd that he could not do otherwise. He solemnly stated he only awaited the opportunity to join them openly ; added that Roumania was not yet ready—from a military point of view. The greater number of Roumania's heavy guns were made by Krupp, and the rifles by Mauser and the Mannlicher Company—both being German and Austrian firms. It was therefore necessary, he said, to go to Germany and Austria for munitions for these weapons : and it stood to reason that the Central Powers would not provide him with such munitions unless he turned over foodstuffs to them ! As to the question of permitting the carriage through Roumania of war materials for Bulgaria and Turkey, and allowing Austrian and German officers to go and come as they pleased, Bratiano *denied* the facts absolutely. He explained such reports by saying that they were circulated by his enemies ! When hard pressed for the truth by the diplomatic insistence of the Allies, and afraid to declare himself one way or the other as to the date when Roumania might be expected to join their forces, Bratiano let it be understood that he would join the Allies as soon as Italy joined them.

In order to lend colour to this assertion he sent a personal friend of his, the brother of the Roumanian Minister at Petrograd, M. Diamandi, to Rome. When Italy finally did join in the campaign Roumania, instead of doing as she had said, still maintained her neutrality ! Bratiano explained this to the Allies by calling attention to the Italian refusal to link their forces and align their strategy with Roumania. It must be admitted that this explanation was well-founded. Italy concentrated all her efforts on the Trentino and Trieste

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as the main objective, and would not extend her operations any further.

I was in Bucharest in July, 1916, and stayed a week there at Reni, near by, with Admiral Vesselkine, from whom I wished to obtain information as to Roumanian affairs for the reason that he knew them intimately. I stayed in Roumania four months, and I was present when she at last took the field.

At that time the Serbian disaster was *fait accompli*! The heroic Serbian people had succumbed at last—thanks to the neutrality of Roumania and Greece and the bad judgment of the Allies. The Allied Forces—under command of the French General, Sarraill, concentrated at Salonika, were growing day by day, and—with the Serbians—attained the not inconsiderable number of slightly more than 300,000 men. Venizelos had instituted at Salonika a separate government from that at Athens, and did his best from that place to bring Greece into the war on the side of the Allies.

The Roumanian Court was now divided into two camps. King Charles had died of a broken heart at not being able to join the Central Powers. King Ferdinand was a constitutional king, and proved himself such, saying that if the majority of his people demanded an Alliance against the Central Powers he would not hesitate to sign it immediately.

As the Government was in the hands of Bratiano, controlling an absolute majority in the House, the King trusted himself absolutely to him, and consequently Bratiano was complete master of the situation.

The Allied cause, however, found strong support at Court in the person of Queen Marie. Through her father, the Duke of Edinburgh, and later of Coburg, she is British, and a grand-daughter of Queen Victoria. Her mother was the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia—the only daughter of Alexander II. (Appendix I.)

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Queen Marie did not attempt to hide her sympathy for the Allies, and as she was extremely popular in Roumania her influence was invaluable to their cause. The Allies also had several strong supporters among the Conservatives. Carp had abandoned politics after the death of Charles I., and the Conservative Party of which he had been leader had split. Marghiloman, preaching neutrality, was at one end of the rope, and Take Ionescu and Philippesco, partisans of the Allies, were at the other end. There was a regular tug-of-war going on between the two factions.

I succeeded, while in Bucharest, in keeping on the best of terms with *all* the parties, and for a time my wife and I were the guests of Philippesco at his charming villa. I was also very intimate with Take Ionescu, and lunched several times a week by Marghiloman.

One day the last-named stated his convictions to me plainly. He said :

“The impossible must never be attempted. My political adversaries want to swallow Transylvania, and even the Banat! Our stomachs cannot digest all this. In annexing Transylvania, which is culturally far more advanced than we are, we should in time become Transylvanians, and no longer be Roumanians. Besides, we are not ready for military action, and our defeat—from my point of view—would be a foregone conclusion. We cannot give any serious military support to the Allies, and I am convinced that our neutrality will be more profitable to them in the long run than if we took the field actively.”

It is necessary to state that since I had first known him some years before, Marghiloman had lost a great deal of his prestige, even in the inner circles of his own party, the leadership of which had passed into the hands of his adversaries. But the Conservative Party, as a whole, only exercised a small influence in the House,

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which was dominated by the Liberals. The latter consisted of bankers, rich men of the bourgeoisie, and of various other individuals who hoped for a public career by strictly carrying out the orders of Bratiano.

The latter was cunning, and had cleverly known how to make game—and profitable game—of the Allies' representatives at Bucharest, and to use them for his own ends! Unfortunately he did not have a very difficult game to play!

The Russian Minister,—Monsieur Poklewsky-Koziell,—was by no means unintelligent, but having fallen out with the First Secretary of our Legation, Monsieur Arsenieff, who had strong friends at court in Petrograd, he narrowly missed being recalled, and kept his position solely by the powerful and friendly support of Sazonoff. He very naturally wished to reinstate himself in the good graces of our Foreign Office, and saw but one way in which he could do so, namely, by forcing Roumania into the war. How he was to achieve this mattered not one whit to him! Knowing that everything depended on Bratiano, he became a very docile instrument in the Roumanian Minister's hands. Moreover, he had embroiled himself with Admiral Vesselkine, and when the latter called the attention of the Russian Government to the serious infractions of the neutrality of Roumania for the benefit and profit of the Central Powers, Poklewsky, under Bratiano's influence, sent home reports which were entirely contradictory to those of the Admiral.

The French Minister,—Monsieur Blondel,—was somewhat in the same position as his Russian colleague. He had been in Roumania for eleven years, and his daughter had married the Governor of Silistria. In Paris Blondel was thought to be too Roumanian in his tendencies, and his recall was decided upon, but he

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was eager to keep his post and, as his only method of doing so, stuck tightly to Bratiano !

The British Minister, Sir H. Barclay, naturally followed the lead of his French colleague. Under the circumstances this was of no great moment, as he had not very much influence in Roumania owing to the pre-war policy of England, which did not like to mix too deeply in Balkan affairs. Barclay was also a very good friend of Poklewsky, who had been his colleague in Persia.

Thus the principal representatives of the Allies were very much under the sway of Bratiano. So much so that when one day after a luncheon at Monsieur Poklewsky's, I criticized Bratiano's policy, Poklewsky and the other two attacked me as though I were a personal enemy of *theirs*, while Barclay marched up and down the room, his hands above his head, wildly protesting against the noise we made.

Thus Bratiano was really dictator of Roumania. Vain, and very ambitious, he was eager to eclipse his father, who had been the liberator of Roumania, and whose colossal statue stands in the public square at Bucharest. All the Roumanian ministers were his most intimate friends. He had made his brother Minister of War, and at the head of the General Staff he had put his cousin, General Iliesco, a military nonentity.

Bratiano did not really know the exact fighting strength of Roumania. He knew that, in case of war, Roumania should be able to put 500,000 men in the field, but he forgot that the Army only had munitions for *two months*,—that it entirely lacked any heavy artillery, and had no aeroplanes at all.

Bratiano had but one aim : which was to force the Allies to pay as high a price as possible for Roumanian assistance. He had assured himself of territorial

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aggrandizement by making an agreement which gave Roumania Transylvania, the Banat and a portion of the Bulgarian Dobroudja, but he had not sufficiently assured himself of armed assistance from the part of the Allies. When,—a few months before Roumania declared war,—Philippesco, who, as Minister of War, knew the very bad condition his country was in,—came to Petrograd, he insisted that Russia should support Roumania with an army of at least 250,000 men. In his overweening self-assurance Bratiano consented to accept the help of three Russian divisions *only*, in the Dobroudja region! Furthermore, he would listen to no suggestions from the Allies as to the military strategy of Roumania. He proposed to leave a small force in Dobroudja and on the Danube, which he thought would be quite sufficient to hold Bulgaria in check, and to throw the weight of the Roumanian army over and beyond the Carpathians, to invade Transylvania. He also hoped to ensure the neutrality of Bulgaria by means of small concessions. In an underhanded way he worked hard for this project, and he was—most unfortunately—well seconded by the diplomatic actions of the Allies! Of course the Bulgars encouraged him in this belief, setting a trap by which they could force him to pay very dearly for his grave and egotistical errors.

To me, having studied the situation very carefully at first hand, the danger of a plan of campaign like this was vividly clear! I had sent my newspaper secret reports as to the real position of affairs, not for publication, but in order that it might be in a position to understand matters in view of eventualities which to my mind were certain to follow. One copy of my report I also sent, through Admiral Vesselkine, to General Brussiloff, who was at that time in command of the Russian Armies in the South, and another copy went

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to the Emperor's headquarters. (Appendix. Report appended.) In this report I asserted that within two months, or less, Roumania would be short of food supplies, and, more important still, would have no ammunition whatsoever! Thus I pointed out she would be a heavy burden on *our* shoulders, as the other Allies could get nothing in the way of supplies of any kind to her. I also stated it would be very difficult for Russia to do much, as we only had one available port, Archangel, which was far to the north, for receiving our own war munitions, and also that our railway facilities were so poor that they barely sufficed for our own purposes,—to say nothing of outfitting and sustaining another country. It was primarily necessary, therefore, that Roumania should open a way for herself through to Salonika in order to get into direct communication with the Allies and their supplies. It was urgently necessary, therefore, that the weight of the Roumanian forces, reinforced by a Russian army of considerable strength, act in conjunction with General Sarraill's forces, and be thrown at once across the Danube and hurled against Bulgaria and Turkey.

In the north all that Roumania had to do to safeguard herself against an Austro-Hungarian attack was to use the Carpathian range, that could easily be defended, and by a comparatively small army.

I did not hesitate to assert the same things in Bucharest, but when Poklewsky learned what I was doing he made a tremendous uproar about it! In the presence of Take Ionescu's brother he accused me of "arranging the cards." The Russian military attaché, Colonel Tatarinoff, took sides and agreed with Poklewsky against me. The Colonel's reports were the antithesis of mine, and naturally their effect was to neutralize my opinion, while they did not in the least advance his theories. Events which soon followed



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proved me to be in the right. While the Roumanian army was descending the Carpathians and invading Transylvania without meeting with any serious resistance, the Bulgars, with German and Turkish assistance, attacked the Roumanians on the Danube, and the weak Russo-Roumanian forces in Dobroudja. Two of the finest and best equipped Roumanian divisions were practically annihilated at Tourtukai (on the Danube), and the little Russo-Roumanian Army had to hastily recross the Danube in full retreat.

Two days before the disaster of Tourtukai, the General commanding the Roumanian Southern Army was quietly playing cards in the club at Bucharest. He was sure the Bulgars would not attack, and in this idiotic supposition he was sustained by Bratiano !

In the north the Prussian General, von Falkenhayn, having been made Commander-in-Chief, gathered an Austro-German army together and completely routed the Roumanian forces. The latter fled in disorder and abandoned in their panic all their strongest passes of the Carpathian Range. The Austro-Germans penetrated Roumania from the north, and at the same time the Turks and Bulgars attacked from the south.

And the Roumanian tragedy had begun !

Obviously, poor Roumania owed her evil fortunes and tremendous sufferings principally to Bratiano, but proper diplomacy on the part of the Allies and their military advisers could have done much to alleviate the situation had they forced Bratiano either to declare war before Serbia had been completely crushed, or to adopt a plan of campaign which conformed to the military situation of the moment.

Of the Allies, Russia must bear the chief blame for the terrible Roumanian disaster. The General Staff should have sent Roumania an army of at least 250,000 men, which Philippesco had asked for. The General

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Staff had no possible excuse for not doing so, as soon after, at a far less favourable time, it was able to concentrate on the Roumanian frontiers a force of 500,000 men. But the General Staff, like all the rest, listened to Bratiano and sent only the three divisions he asked for.

Sazonoff, surely, should have made it his policy to bring pressure to bear on Bratiano, and persuade him to follow a plan which would not only conform with ours, but with that of the Serbians. He was always afraid Bratiano might go over to the enemy, which as a matter of fact was absolutely impossible! Bratiano had gone too far with the Allies to retreat. Moreover, the immense majority of people in the country were for war against the Central Powers, and Bratiano was neither big enough nor strong enough to finally thwart the desires of the Roumanian people.

Sazonoff, in his policy towards Bulgaria, showed a still greater lack of foresight, and allowed himself to be completely duped by Ferdinand and his ministers. It was so evident from the beginning of the war that Bulgaria was gradually but surely going over to the enemy's camp! German officers in civilian clothes inundated Sofia. Guns of heavy calibre, aeroplanes, etc., were being constantly sent from Germany into Bulgarian territory. As she was not yet militarily prepared, it was only natural that her diplomats assured Russia that Bulgaria would maintain a rigid neutrality. But the numerous Slav societies, to which I still belong, and which are principally composed of men who knew and understood our brothers in the Orient very well indeed, were not in the least deceived by the Czar of Bulgaria! More than once, in resolutions constantly submitted to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, they warned him of the grave danger which threatened. But M. Sazonoff continued to follow his own policies!

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He had always relied on P. N. Miliukoff, who later became the first Minister of Foreign Affairs after the Revolution.

M. Miliukoff had at one time been Professor of History in the University of Petrograd. But being a participant in a revolutionary movement, he was forced to escape into exile. He was warmly received in Bulgaria, and was given the chair of History in the University of Sofia. Naturally ever after he was always very sympathetic towards Bulgaria. Furthermore, his professional temperament made it very difficult for him to deviate from a course which he had once determined to follow. He was sure of Bulgaria, and shut his eyes to all evidences of treachery, even when they were most apparent. He might be classed with the famous band of German professors at the Frankfort Diet, of whom the German people exclaimed :

“ Hundert Professoren ! Vaterland, du bist verloren ! ” ( “ A hundred professors ! My country, you are lost ! ” )

Two weeks before Bulgaria declared war on Serbia, M. T. Spolaikovitch, Serbian Minister at Petrograd, called on Sazonoff with instructions from Nikola Paschitch, President of the Serbian Council. He told our Minister of Foreign Affairs that there was not the least doubt in Serbia that Bulgaria would very shortly enter the war as an ally of the Central Powers ! The Serbian Minister asked the Russian Government's authorization for the Serbian forces to attack Bulgaria at once ! He stated that he was sure the Serbian Army, already hardened by fighting, and in good condition, whereas Bulgaria as yet had not had time to mobilize her forces, could easily take Sofia. Serbia therefore proposed to dethrone Czar Ferdinand of Bulgaria, to arrest all German officers, whether in mufti or in uniform, whom they could catch, and then conclude an

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alliance with Bulgaria, by opening the eyes of the Bulgars to the nefarious policies, entirely anti-Slav, which their sovereign had been hatching.

Sazonoff was terribly upset. He threatened to demand the resignation of Spolaikovitch if he persisted in maintaining such an attitude. A stormy scene between the two diplomats followed, but there was nothing else for the Serbian Minister to do but telegraph Paschitch all that Sazonoff had said. The next day Spolaikovitch had lunch with me. The unhappy man, tears streaming down his face, told me the details of his interview with Sazonoff. I suggested that he talk the matter over with Goremikine, who was at that time President of the Council of Ministers. As the Serbian Minister accepted this suggestion with alacrity, I at once telephoned to Goremikine, asking him to receive Spolaikovitch. Goremikine asked the Serbian Minister to come and see him at once. When the latter told him of his fears the old statesman said to him :

“What the devil did you go to Sazonoff for? You Serbians should have *acted!* You know Sazonoff of old, and very well. Of a surety it is not he who would sanction any such precipitate actions, however logical they might be.”

The incident shows how even in such dangerous times, the Russian Cabinet was all at sixes and sevens on the most vital policies.

A few days after Bulgaria attacked Serbia, and the poor little nation, caught between the heavy cross-fire of the Bulgarians and the Germans, experienced complete and tragic disaster !

The untold miseries of the Serbian people have continued even after their political existence had vanished—let us hope not for ever.

The Allies had tried ever since the war began to

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obtain Italy's assistance, and here again it was the Slavs, and especially the Serbians, who had to bear the brunt and pay the price for Italian participation. The Italian chauvinists insisted on compensation in the Balkans, and Sazonoff signed a treaty with Italy whereby Italy—after a vigorous campaign—should obtain not only Istria, with Trieste, but also a portion of the Dalmatian coast, which is almost entirely populated by Serbs. Sazonoff further recognized the rights of Italy in Vallonev, the Albanian port, and in Avana, in the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean.

When the pitiful remnants of that brave little Serbian army, starving, crushed to the very dust by their horrible sufferings, clotheless, shoeless, and wholly destitute after a truly epic march across the wilderness of Albanian mountains, headed by their heroic King, seventy-four years of age, who insisted upon sharing the miseries of his soldiers, finally reached the shores of the Adriatic, they received prompt aid from France and Greece. France, chivalrous as ever, sent provisions and arms, and Greece offered Corfu as a refuge for the Government of Serbia and as a centre in which the Serbian army could be reorganized.

Sazonoff's fall, however, was not on account of his foreign policy. It was the result of a memoir he presented to Emperor Nicholas on the Polish Question !

## CHAPTER IX

### CZAR FERDINAND OF BULGARIA

THE Czar of Bulgaria has played such a sinister part in the European tragedy that he deserves a special pillory.

Prince Ferdinand of Coburg had a sister in Munich, Princess Amelie, who was married to Duke Max of Bavaria, and Ferdinand was often a guest there. In 1892 Europe ignored him completely. In point of fact, he was then Prince of Bulgaria, but the European Courts still regarded him as Prince of Coburg. He was probably informed by his sister of my intimate friendship with my chief, Count Osten-Sacken, and when I met him for the first time at Bayreuth at a Wagnerian Festival in 1893 he went out of his way to be specially courteous to me. He hoped, through me, to influence Count Osten-Sacken, and through him to be able to approach Emperor Alexander III., who so far had obstinately refused to recognize him. A brilliant conversationalist, a connoisseur of music, speaking the flowery French of the eighteenth century, and knowing full well how best to use his excellent knowledge of both social and diplomatic history, he was a man once known, never forgotten. A few years later I met him in Berlin on the occasion of his first official visit to the German capital (1896) after his official recognition by Nicholas II. But the German Emperor, who had known the Prince in his youth and disliked him, paid

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him no special attentions, and gave him what was considered a very bad reception. The Emperor did not come to the station to meet him, but sent a minor Prince. There was no guard of honour, and even the Chancellor of the Empire, Prince Hohenlohe, was conspicuous by his absence.

The next day the Emperor opened the Pan-German Exhibition, and there was a royal procession in which the Prince of Bulgaria was preceded by all the Princes of Prussia and was obliged to give his arm to the Countess Keller, who was only a lady-in-waiting to the Empress.

After the opening of the Exhibition, Prince Ferdinand came to the Russian Embassy and said, somewhat bitterly, to Count Osten-Sacken :

“ You see, Monsieur l’Ambassadeur, how they treat the Prince of Bulgaria in Berlin.”

The Ambassador replied : “ Patience, Monseigneur, you are clever enough and diplomatic enough to be able to arrange such things to your liking.”

The Ambassador proved right. At one of the big regimental luncheons, the Prince of Bulgaria happened to be seated beside the Emperor. At the end of the luncheon, Prince Ferdinand began to entertain the Emperor with some of his scandalous anecdotes. He gradually slipped from scandal to political matters with such dexterity that the German Emperor did not recognize where he was being led, but remained over two hours talking to the Prince, whom he hitherto had affected to despise.

As a result, the Emperor asked the Prince to prolong his stay in Berlin for one or two days more, and when Ferdinand finally left Berlin, William went to the station to see him off. After his departure, William came to the Russian Embassy, and said to Count Osten-Sacken :

“ My dear Count, your protégé from Bulgaria is a

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very adroit fellow ! ” ( “ Votre protégé de Bulgarie est un coco ! ” )

In this way Ferdinand gained his point. The tragi-comedy of the situation lay in the fact that it was through Russian diplomacy that Ferdinand first became a friend of the German Emperor, and this eventually led to his alliance with Germany in the great war.

In 1908, at the time of the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Russo-Bulgarian relations became very strained again. At Petrograd everyone was certain Ferdinand had allied himself by secret treaty with Austro-Hungary. The Russian Emperor did not recognize his title of Czar, and there was even some question of breaking off our diplomatic relations with Sofia. Under these difficult circumstances Ferdinand gave proof of an extremely quick mind.

Grand Duke Vladimir of Russia, who was an intimate personal friend of his, died suddenly at Petrograd as the result of an attack of influenza. Ferdinand at once started from Sofia to take part in the Grand Duke's obsequies. He decided to do this very abruptly, and was already on the way to the Russian frontier while the Russian Court was still undecided as to what sort of a reception he should have. He could not be totally ignored, and the Emperor Nicholas, finding his hand forced, accorded him royal honours. Thus his recognition by the Russian court as the Czar of Bulgaria was automatically accomplished. It was a master-stroke on Ferdinand's part.

It would be puerile to deny that he is an extraordinarily able and clever man. He had an especial gift of knowing how to make use of the slightest circumstance favourable to him. To flatter those who could further his plans, he was apparently ever ready to change his opinions.



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He once told the Turkish Ambassador to Berlin, Achmet Tewfik Pasha, that were he not a Catholic, he would prefer above anything else to be a Mussulman. The very next day he confessed to the High Priest of our Church—Father A. Maltzoff—his unbounded admiration for the Orthodox belief! He kissed the hand of the Sultan of Turkey, and of Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria, and bowed double before the Emperors of Germany and Russia. When necessary, he would emphasize his French antecedents, and claimed descent from Louis XIV., the King of the Sun. (Ferdinand is the son of Princess Clementine of France, daughter of Louis Philippe, last King of the French.) But this did not at all prevent him, on other occasions, from fervently declaring he was a German Prince. An international chameleon, he became Russian for the Russians, French for the French, and German for the Germans! He avoided only declaring himself a Bulgarian! He despises the people whose nationality he adopted to rule over them. Worse still, he suspects them always. When he shakes hands with one of his subjects he is carefully gloved, as he dreads catching some disease or other. The Bulgars reciprocate his feelings toward them, and he is far from being popular, but such is his ability that he is absolute master of them, and in difficult moments all eyes are turned toward the Royal Palace watching for his decision.

Political intrigue was ever his favourite pastime. He supported Stambouloff, a very popular statesman in Bulgaria, in order to consolidate his own position with the people, and connived at Stambouloff's death, who was assassinated in the streets of Sofia, because he believed that statesman stood in the way of his recognition by Russia. To achieve his own ends he used the diplomats accredited to his court by other nations with consummate skill, intuitively picking out their weak

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points the first time he met them. Not wishing France and Russia to unite on any policy inimical to him, with incredible cunning he contrived to alienate Monsieur Paléologue, the French Minister, and M. Sementovsky, the Russian Minister at Sofia. The Russian Minister told me that things had gone so far that he preferred to work with his German colleague, Baron Romberg, rather than with Monsieur Paléologue, and this at a time when the Franco-Russian Alliance was very strong.

Very soon after his recognition as Czar of Bulgaria by Russia, the question of a political treaty and military convention between Russia and Bulgaria was raised. Ferdinand hastened to declare himself an ardent partisan of such a convention, but promptly set to work against it secretly. This was quite natural, seeing that since 1908 he had linked the interests of his country with those of the Habsburg Monarchy. Each clause of the projected treaty was objected to by the Bulgarian Government. Ferdinand suddenly became an ultra-Constitutional monarch, and complained to the Russian Minister at Sofia that he could do nothing. In consequence, although they were exceedingly flattering to Bulgaria, the Political Treaty and the Military Convention failed utterly.

Fate should have made Ferdinand an actor, as he would most certainly have eclipsed the talent of either a Coquelin or a Rossi. On a throne he was neither more nor less than a traitor. When he kissed the Sultan's hand he was planning his ruin. When he held out his hand in friendship to Serbia his mind was scheming the betrayal of that nation. He asked for reinforcements from his Serbian ally for the taking of Adrianople, and at the same time was discussing the best way to seize Macedonia, despite Serbia. He deceived everyone at every opportunity, not omitting his own country, which

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he forced to follow an anti-Slav and anti-national policy. If any opportunity arises in the present war he will not hesitate to embarrass his ally, the German Emperor, should favourable conditions arise for so doing.

In his private life Ferdinand is a tyrant and a deceiver. His first wife, a Princess of Parma, killed herself, as she could not bear his treatment any longer. The Princess of Reuss, his second wife, who has died since the beginning of the present war, was reduced solely to playing the part of a nurse to her children. Her sons hardly dared speak in his presence.

Ferdinand is very much afraid of contagious diseases, and of attacks against his person. During the present war, in order to give himself courage, he has taken to alcohol. His sleep is short and very disturbed. He changes his sleeping quarters every night. At meals he insists that members of his family or one of his guests even taste the dishes before he will touch them. Perhaps he may escape the violent death he fears, but he will *not* escape the impartial judgment of history, having made a German province of the Slav nation which by evil fortune had him as its Sovereign. Immensely vain of the result of the war with Turkey, he had himself photographed in the costume of a Byzantine Emperor ! The livery of a footman to the German Emperor would suit him ever so much better !

## CHAPTER X

THE LAST FOREIGN MINISTERS OF NICHOLAS II.—  
STURMER, POKROVSKY, VICE-MINISTER NERATOFF—  
THE AMBASSADORS

**S**AZONOFF was replaced by Monsieur Sturmer, who was at the time President of the Ministerial Council. He was nothing but a courtier. For many years he had occupied the position of master of ceremonies at court. After that he was governor of two different provinces, where he proved himself to be an out-and-out reactionary, and finally he became a member of the Council of Empire. He never made a speech in council, contenting himself by voting with the party of the extreme right, and he knew absolutely nothing of our foreign policy. He was entirely preoccupied by his efforts to hold his position. He was as false as an imitation coin. On the day before his nomination as President of the Council, I met him at M. Goremikine's residence, against whom he was constantly plotting and intriguing, and whom he was to succeed on the morrow, though Goremikine did not know that at the time. I heard him assure the old statesman of his absolute devotion and admiration.

When he was appointed foreign minister he placed himself entirely in the hands of M. Neratoff, the vice-minister and disciple of Sazonoff. Our policy therefore remained the same, though if anything it became more generally muddled, as the new minister thought

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far more of himself and of his own position than he did of affairs of state. Sturmer is generally accused of having led Russia towards a separate peace. I know, for instance, that Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador to Petrograd, was of this opinion, but personally I do not agree with this point of view. Sturmer only obeyed his Imperial master's orders, and Emperor Nicholas II., with all his faults, would never have been a traitor, nor would he *ever* have signed a separate peace. I am convinced of this because I discussed the point with Goremykin, and also with persons of the immediate entourage of the Emperor.

The last minister of foreign affairs under Nicholas II. was M. Pokrovsky, who held office for only two months. His appointment by the Emperor was wholly unexpected; but for once Nicholas was fortunate in his choice. The new minister had passed his official life in the department of finance. Count Witte had been the first to recognize his great capacity and possibilities, and Count Kokovtsov appointed him assistant minister of finance. He then became a member of the council of the Empire and—prior to becoming foreign minister—occupied the post of state controller, with rank equivalent to a minister of state. He had never meddled with Russia's foreign policy in any way, but as he was very intelligent and gifted with a large degree of natural finesse he soon became familiar with the duties and responsibilities of his new position.

The personnel of the ministry received him at first with a great deal of scepticism, and the various chiefs of the bureaux were sure that he would prove a docile instrument in their hands. But they soon recognized, to their pained surprise, that in Pokrovsky they had a stern chief, who knew how to enforce his orders.

Pokrovsky was thoroughly aware of the perilous situation in which Russia was placed. He reiterated

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time and time again that the abnormal conditions then existing in the Empire must not last, indeed could not last, and that he clearly saw a terrible revolution approaching. One evening in his private study he went to a window which overlooked the square before the Imperial Palace, where stands the column of Alexander I., surrounded by four great bronze candelabra. I asked him what he was gazing at so intently.

"My dear friend," said he, "I am admiring those beautiful candelabra, and asking myself from which of the four I may soon be hung."

But his fears were groundless. When the revolution broke out he was not even arrested or molested. More than this, the provisional government authorized him to keep his offices in the ministry building until he found suitable ones elsewhere. He had known how to win the esteem of the most extreme parties by his frankness, his honesty and his progressive ideas.

Among the foreign ministers of the reign of Nicholas II., it is necessary to mention M. Neratoff, who, though only assistant minister, nevertheless played an ill-fated part in our diplomacy. He was nothing but a windbag. He began his diplomatic career some thirty-five years before the revolution, and starting in the modest position of a minor attaché at the ministry, finished by reaching the post of assistant minister without ever having been attached to any of our embassies or legations abroad. His mental capacity was below mediocrity. His entire success he owed to his zeal and to his very thorough knowledge of the contents of our diplomatic archives. He had been at college with Sazonoff, who later appointed him assistant minister, and since then always had the sense to make himself indispensable to all the foreign ministers, despite their widely divergent mentalities

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and ideas. Sturmer, Pokrovsky, Miliukoff, and even Terestchenko could not do without his collaboration.

These ministers succeeded one another as in a moving picture play, but Neratoff stayed on securely at his post. Petrograd hummed, "The world may come, the world may go, but Neratoff stays on for ever." The representatives of foreign powers dealt especially with him, and visited him daily in their official capacities. He was no longer the little Neratoff of olden days. He had become the right-hand man of all the ministers. But his mentality did not change either; he was ever the same as on the first day he entered the service, always very eager to execute the orders of his superiors, a hard worker, but painfully narrow-minded, and wholly devoid of any of the attributes of the great statesman he fondly imagined he resembled. His influence was especially pernicious in Balkan affairs. He was completely hypnotized by the personal charm of Miliukoff, and like Sazonoff, was blindly led by Ferdinand of Bulgaria. In short, "little" Neratoff was a tragic personality in the annals of our diplomacy. His period at the foreign office will be marked with a black cross by any impartial critic of Russian history.

In order that Russian diplomacy and policies during the reign of Nicholas II. up to the outbreak of the Revolution may be understood by the world at large, it is necessary to give some particulars concerning our more important ambassadors and ministers, and the representatives of the allied powers accredited to Petrograd. Nicholas II. had three ambassadors at Berlin during his reign: Count Schuvaloff, Count Osten-Sacken and M. Sverbeff. Count Schuvaloff had been appointed by Alexander III. Prior to being made an ambassador, he had had nothing to do with our foreign policies. He was a general who had distinguished himself in the Russo-Turkish War, 1877-78,

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and had won the military cross of St. George for meritorious services. He commanded the Imperial Guard Corps at the time that Alexander III. chose him as his ambassador at Berlin. He soon accustomed himself to his new position, and his military manners gave much satisfaction at the German capital. It did not take him long to become a diplomat of much finesse and adroitness. He learned how to steer a safe course between Scylla and Charybdis. Prince Bismarck was his intimate friend, and at the same time he managed to enjoy the German Emperor's highest favour and esteem. His popularity at Berlin was tremendous, especially in military circles, and he was very fond of surrounding himself with officers, and—as all good Russians are very fond of wine—did not disdain to become hilariously drunk with them. But he had one priceless trait: after having consumed an incredibly large amount of liquor he always remembered everything he had said, and, far more important, he also remembered everything said to him.

M. de Bacheracht, secretary of the embassy, with whom the ambassador especially liked to work, told me the following story:

One evening Count Herbert Bismarck, son of the chancellor, and secretary in the German foreign office, came to see Schuvaloff. Count Herbert was not a man to deny the pleasures of wine either. The two drank heavily until both diplomats were *hors de combat*. Count Herbert, his tongue loosened by wine, began to make a confidant of our ambassador, and told him many very indiscreet but highly interesting things. Schuvaloff only replied with foolish jests and laughter, but no sooner was the German out of the embassy than the ambassador, after plunging his head in a basin of iced water, sent for Bacheracht and dictated



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*word for word* a report of all the German diplomat had foolishly confided to him.

When Schuvaloff left Berlin, being recalled by Nicholas, and made Governor-General of Poland—the Emperor came in person to the station to salute and say *au revoir* to his friend, whom he honoured by calling “mein teurer Freund.” Schuvaloff left nothing but universal regret in Berlin, and wrote a brilliant page in the annals of our diplomacy.

I have already on several occasions referred to my chief, Count Osten-Sacken, who was Schuvaloff's successor at Berlin, and who stayed there fifteen years, all through the most dangerous and trying times of our relations with the German Empire. Count Osten-Sacken was the son of the famous hero of Sebastopol. The family originated in the Baltic provinces; his ancestors were all of the orthodox religion, and Russians heart and soul. His grandfather had been killed on the battlefield during the Napoleonic Wars, and his great-uncle, Prince Osten-Sacken, had been Military Governor of Paris in 1815. He had married a Princess Dolgorouki, whose ancestors had reigned in Moscow. He was her second husband. Her first was Prince Golitzin, our ex-ambassador to Madrid. Countess Osten-Sacken was a woman of an exceedingly rare type. Married when she was only sixteen to Prince Golitzin, she had begun her wedded life in Paris, and had received in her salon the flower of the French diplomatic and political world of the day. Messieurs Guizot and Thiers were her intimates, and Chopin himself gave her piano lessons. Count Osten-Sacken had been secretary of our embassy at Madrid when Prince Golitzin was ambassador. It was there that he first met his future wife, whom he married shortly after the death of the prince. Countess Osten-Sacken was of inestimable value and a powerful support to

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her husband. She had been a childhood friend and playmate of many of the Russian Grand Duchesses, and her position at court was a most distinguished one. She knew all the secrets. Emperor Nicholas was especially fond of her, and always did her the honour of kissing her hand wherever and whenever they met. The German Emperor did the same thing. In her private life the Countess was simplicity personified, kind and affable to all, without excepting the most humble of her servants. Towards the members of her official family she was like a tender mother, and we all cherish reverently affectionate memories of this noble woman.

Count Osten-Sacken began his diplomatic career at eighteen years of age, as attaché at the chancellory of Prince Paskevitch, commander of the Russian armies on the Danube in the Russo-Turkish War (1854). After a short subsequent stay as secretary to the chancellory at Petrograd, and also as secretary of the embassy at Madrid, he left diplomatic life and did not re-enter it until 1864, being appointed at that time first secretary and afterwards Chargé d'Affaires at Turin and at Florence. From there he went as minister resident to Darmstadt, and then as minister to Munich, from which place he was appointed ambassador to Berlin in 1895. He had spent more than forty years of his diplomatic life in Germany, and naturally knew it most thoroughly in consequence, but, strangely enough, both he and his wife massacred the German language horribly. A diplomat of the old school, he always spoke French by preference, and although extremely Russian by nature and sentiment, he wrote Russian with the greatest of difficulty. When Alexander III. replaced French by Russian in the diplomatic reports and communications, Count Osten-Sacken was at first much embarrassed, but despite his

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great age, he set to work like any schoolboy to learn it, and in two years his official reports written in the Russian language were used as models at Petrograd.

From the previous chapters, it must be evident what a great part Count Osten-Sacken played in Berlin during most trying times. Destined always to suffer for the incredible and stupid caprices of Nicholas II. and to support the intemperances, idiotic rages and sullennesses of the German Emperor, it was only his absolute poise and dignity which made him so respected, both in Berlin and Petrograd, and enabled him to prevent any very serious complications. In brief, he was a great ambassador, and when he disappeared, though he was then practically at the end of his span of life, old and very frail, Russian diplomacy soon learned what a brain and character it had lost.

M. Sverbeff was his successor. He had previously been minister to Greece for about two years. He owed his sudden appointment exclusively to his friendship with Sazonoff. He was a good man, nothing more. He had very little personality. He could not hold the German Emperor in check, and the latter never took him seriously. One day, for instance, at the time of the last visit of Nicholas II. to Berlin, at luncheon in one of the barracks of the Imperial Guard, Sverbeff, contrary to usual etiquette, appeared in full uniform, wearing the Grand Cordon of Prussia, which had been bestowed on him the day before. Emperor William made fun of his costume, and said to him :

“ It is easy to see that you are a civilian.”

To which Sverbeff answered, “ I am so happy, sire, at having received your Grand Cordon that I sleep in it.”

The Emperor shot back, “ And you are right, you received it very quickly—now endeavour to deserve it.”

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I would very much like to have been present on any occasion when the Emperor would have dared say any such thing to Count Osten-Sacken! Sverbeff was absent from Berlin during the summer of 1914 at the time our relations with Germany were becoming more and more strained. When he returned, he said to M. Bronevsky, councillor of the Embassy,

"I believe, *mon cher*, that things are not going so well here."

Five days later his passports were handed to him. I think that this one detail suffices to show how much our ambassador realized the seriousness of the situation.

Nicholas II. was represented in Paris by three ambassadors during his reign, Baron de Mohrenheim, M. Nelidoff, and M. Isvolsky. I have already dealt fully with the last-named. As for Baron Mohrenheim and M. Nelidoff, they were both incontestably statesmen, with horizons and understandings. Baron de Mohrenheim had contributed much to our alliance with France, and M. Nelidoff had been one of our most brilliant ambassadors in Turkey. Both men enjoyed in Paris positions of enormous influence. The recall of Nelidoff was solely due to an intrigue on the part of Isvolsky, which eventually forced Isvolsky's fall from the foreign office. He had, however, prepared for himself a comfortable nest in Paris.

During the same period we had in London two ambassadors, Baron de Staal and Count Benckendorff. The first was a diplomat of the old school, prudent, and avoiding all serious action. He made a very good position for himself in the British capital, and was very clever in smoothing over any difficulties he discovered in his diplomatic path. The services he rendered Russia are not to be denied, especially if one takes into consideration that in his day we were at the climax of Russo-British antagonism.

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His successor, Count Benckendorff, was one of our greatest ambassadors. Although he was of German origin, and had a sister married to Prince Hatzfeldt, Duke of Trachenberg, and also a Catholic, Benckendorff was Slav to his backbone. He was even more Russian than the Russians. An eye-witness told me that he had tears in his eyes when he received a dispatch from Sazonoff consenting to the abandonment of Scutari by the victorious Montenegrin army. The Serbian people had in him a powerful and convincing champion. I do not think that I exaggerate in the least when I assert that to Count Benckendorff the Slavic world owes the recognition of its interests by Great Britain.

At Vienna, after Prince Lobanoff, we had no ambassadors worth mentioning. Count Kapnist, who succeeded him, was perhaps the only one who made a position for himself in the Austro-Hungarian political world. As for M. de Giers, son of our ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Schebeko, the latter was an absolute nonentity, and the former was only in Vienna for a short time.

Among our ambassadors at Rome, it is only necessary to mention M. de Giers, son of our ex-Foreign Minister. He has a long diplomatic career behind him, and was the last ambassador to Turkey before our rupture with that country. Physically and morally he is his father's understudy; he is prudent and not entirely lacking in finesse, but he is not equal to any great sustained action. His appointment as minister of foreign affairs was often mooted, and of a surety, had he received the office he would not have been guilty of the blunders made by Sazonoff.

At Constantinople, there were three ambassadors during the reign of Nicholas II.: M. Zinovieff, M. Tcharikov, and M. de Giers, junior. I have already

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described the latter, and pass on to M. Zinovieff. He was a deep student and connoisseur of Oriental matters, and had spent part of his career in the Balkans and part in Turkey. He had been minister to Persia, and director of the first department of foreign affairs, under which came all matters relating to Turkey. On one occasion in negotiating a treaty with Persia, the foreign office was ready to accede to certain amendments desired by the Persian government. Zinovieff ignored his official instructions and insisted upon the original conditions. He always had a revolver on his writing-table, as he had fully decided to kill himself if his plans failed. When he was ambassador at Constantinople he constantly asserted that the Young Turk party would of a certainty fall into the hands of Germany, and he strongly advised us not to support that party. But in Great Britain, the Young Turks were in high favour. The Petrograd Cabinet, which was then directed by Isvolsky, was most anxious for a complete understanding with Great Britain, and was not inclined to follow Zinovieff's advice, or heed his warnings.

The old diplomat was therefore recalled, and his place filled by N. V. Tcharikov, who was a pro-Young Turk, and thus, quite unconsciously, the way was opened for a Turko-German Alliance. The idealistic policy and attitude towards the Young Turks adopted by the London Cabinet, and the natural desire of our minister of foreign affairs to support British statesmanship, played directly into the German Emperor's hands. Indeed, the British Liberal Party treated the Young Turk party almost as co-religionists, taking into no consideration the fact that their leader, Enver Pasha, was an out-and-out German mercenary.

As for our ministers accredited to the smaller nations, it is only necessary to mention those who were really

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able men, or those who by their misplaced activities did the greatest harm. Among the first are, N. H. de Hartwig and D. K. Sementowsky-Kuzilo ; among the second, A. W. Nekludoff and A. N. Savinsky.

M. de Hartwig, after having been vice-director and later director of the first department in the bureau of foreign affairs (the Asiatic department), represented our government in Persia, and afterwards in Serbia. He was very far-sighted, and perfectly understood the troubles which were agitating Persia even in his day. He felt we should uphold the Shah. He also knew very well that Persia was not yet ready for a constitution, and that the Shah, and only the Shah, was the foundation stone of order in his country. Furthermore, Shah Mahomet Ali was devoted to Russia body and soul, and this was still another reason why we should have given him our whole-hearted support. The British Liberal Cabinet, however, was anxious to support a constitutional government in Persia. When in 1907, Isvolsky concluded his treaty with England which divided Persia into two zones of influence, Shah Mahomet Ali abdicated in favour of his young son. As a result of our policy we lost our influence in southern Persia, and German influence replaced that of England at Teheran, just as it had done in Constantinople. In brief, Britain's idealism opened the road for German intrigue and Realpolitik, whereas if Russia and Britain had followed the road of their own interests they would have weakened the German position. M. de Hartwig fought his hardest, and in consequence was the *bête noire* of the Germans. Isvolsky sacrificed him and sent him to Serbia, possibly with the hope that in the very slippery and dangerous Balkan region he might break his neck.

But shortly after his arrival at Belgrade, Hartwig created a most exceptional position for himself. The



COUNT WITTE.



M. SAZONOFF.



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King, Prince Alexander, Paschitch, none of these made any decision without first consulting him. He had cleverly instilled in the minds of all the Serbian parties a love for Russia. I have seen him at his work, having been his guest for some time at Belgrade in 1912. Every morning his study was besieged by Serbian statesmen who came to get advice from him, but as usual the saying that a prophet is not without honour save in his own country held true, and Isvolsky and Sazonoff, possibly fearing a successor in Hartwig, took it upon themselves to paralyse his actions and nullify his work. When Hartwig warned our ministry that the first Balkan war was inevitable, Sazonoff sent him a note with orders to advise a moderate course to the Serbian government. Hartwig told me personally of the reception that such notes received at the hands of the Serbian government. One day when our minister had read one of these innumerable notes sent by Sazonoff to M. Paschitch, the old Serbian statesman said to him :

“Have you finished, *mon cher ami* ? All right ! *C'est bien. Nous pouvons maintenant causer sérieusement !*” (“We can now discuss matters seriously.”)

While M. Hartwig was at Belgrade, D. K. Sementovsky, also a very able man, and one who knew the Balkan situation thoroughly, was our minister at Sofia. Both these men were friends of long standing and understood each other perfectly, but their combined efforts were of no avail against the prejudices of our foreign ministers.

Hartwig died very suddenly after drinking a cup of black coffee at the residence of the Austro-Hungarian minister. As it was well known in Belgrade that our minister was hated and feared by the Austrians, of whom he was the sworn enemy, public opinion in Serbia still attributes his death to a political assassination by

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poisoning. The body was given a magnificent burial at the expense of the Serbian government ; the entire court, led by the King, all the political parties without exception and immense crowds followed the hearse. His death was the cause of national mourning in Serbia, and the Serbian people erected a superb monument to him by subscription ; and an avenue in Belgrade was given his name.

Before being appointed Minister to Sofia, D. K. Sementovsky-Kuzilov had replaced M. Hartwig as Director of the First Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Isvolsky did not get on well with him, and sent him to Bulgaria in order to get rid of him. His début at Sofia was not at all promising. Ferdinand, knowing Isvolsky's antipathy towards Sementovsky, hoped to find in the latter a docile instrument. When he discovered that he had to do with a strong personality, he did everything possible to force his recall—not even hesitating to enmesh Sementovsky's wife in his intrigue towards that end. But to give Nicholas II. his due, on this occasion he did not consent to Sementovsky being recalled, but supported him strongly.

Subtle and evasive as ever, Ferdinand promptly changed his policy toward the Russian Legation. He offered the minister and his wife every courtesy, always in the hope of getting the Russian minister on his side of the fence ; but the latter continued on his own lines, thinking only of the good of his country. Unfortunately, Isvolsky rarely listened to his advice. Sazonoff, it is true, esteemed him greatly, but such esteem was not under the circumstances of much practical value, unless it were backed with diplomatic support.

M. Sementovsky died at Sofia of appendicitis. Relatively speaking he was a young man as diplomats go, being only forty-nine. The necessary operation

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performed by a very famous Viennese surgeon was a complete success, but he was *afterwards* attended by the Czar of Bulgaria's own physician, and it was common property in Belgrade that his death—like that of Hartwig—was due to assassination.

Nicholas II. had bad luck. Almost at the same moment he lost two of his best diplomats, and the men whom Sazonoff chose to replace them were not of the same calibre.

A. W. Nekludoff, Councillor of the Paris Embassy, was appointed to Sofia. He was of mediocre intelligence, and, in consequence, not in the least fitted to measure wits with Ferdinand—past master in all political intrigue. The Czar of Bulgaria did not concern himself about him one way or the other—in fact, whole months passed by without his being received.

Nekludoff, therefore, had not the faintest conception of the real situation, and did not believe there would be a Balkan War, even when it had become inevitable. He amused himself by studying Bulgarian history, and sent the results of his studies to our Foreign Office. He one day read me a report of his on King Krum of Bulgaria, who lived before Bulgaria was conquered by Turkey! (The Turks made their entry into Europe in 1453.)

When Sazonoff himself recognized the utter impossibility of keeping Nekludoff any longer at Sofia, he made a delightful shuffle to replace him. As A. N. Savinsky was also compromised in Sweden,—where he was our Minister at that time—Sazonoff simply made them exchange posts.

I have already mentioned Savinsky in connection with Count Lamsdorff. The “means” which he employed to advance his career will therefore be remembered. At Sofia his behaviour caused considerable scandal. The Russian Legation became the centre of

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nightly revels, and was known as a veritable gambling hell by night, while by day the Russian Minister either promenaded the streets of Sofia dressed as a dandy, or made motor trips outside the city limits. It is said, however, that he foresaw the alliance of Bulgaria with the Central Powers. The truth of this I cannot vouch for, but in any case, a man with a past such as Savinsky's, a man whom the Emperor himself had dubbed "The Countess Lamsdorff," ought not to have been included in the list of our diplomats in foreign countries.

Of the diplomats accredited to the Russian Court during the last years preceding the Revolution, I knew Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador in Petrograd, when I was stationed at our Embassy in Berlin and he was Councillor of the British Embassy there. Buchanan is an Englishman in every sense of the word, an accomplished gentleman, but cold and rather reserved. He had always dreamed of a Russo-British *rapprochement*. He became very popular in Russia, and was elected an Honorary Citizen of Moscow and a Member of the University of the ancient capital. The Russian Liberals saw in him a support to their aspirations.

France was represented at Petrograd by M. Paléologue, who had not had much experience as a diplomat, having had only one post, that of minister at Sofia. At Petrograd M. Paléologue was hardly a success. He was looked upon as light weight, and was not very popular. The real influence of our western Allies was concentrated in the person of Sir George Buchanan, and consequently England was paramount in our policies.

Marquis Carloti, the Italian Ambassador, was an accomplished diplomat of the Machiavellian school. Astute, clever, he managed to know everything, and was ready at all times to make use of his knowledge. He did well for Italian nationalistic claims, forgetting

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that the war was not a matter of one nation, but of nations. None of our ministers or the foreign representatives appeared to grasp the fundamentals of German policy towards the Balkans. Italy, through her representatives in Petrograd, made the same error as Austria-Hungary. Her politicians, and consequently her foreign representatives, ignored and antagonized the Serbians and Jugo-Slavs. As will be obvious before the war is ended, this policy must be changed. Carloti did not appreciate criticism along such lines and did his best to prevent it, thinking he best served his country in that manner.

Since the revolution the Marquis Carloti has been replaced by Marquis de la Toretta, a very clever man and a great friend of Russia and the whole Slavic world.

The Japanese Ambassador, Viscount Motono, later Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, came to Petrograd at a very difficult time, as the Russo-Japanese war had hardly ended. But gradually Viscount Motono by his affability and extreme ability created an enviable position, not only for himself, but for his nation, at Petrograd. He belonged to the highest society, and was as welcome in financial circles as among the lower classes. He was not content with being in Petrograd, but travelled all over our vast country so as to be able to study it thoroughly at first hand. Belonging to Prince Ito's school, he was a fervent advocate of a binding alliance between Japan and Russia. Both our treaties with Japan (1907 and 1916) owe their existence chiefly to him as their author. He left Petrograd with nothing but the best of wishes and kindest thoughts on the part of us all.

I have endeavoured to describe the personalities of our own ambassadors and ministers as well as those accredited to us, in order to give an exact picture of the circumstances and characters which decided our foreign

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policy during the reign of Nicholas II. The vacillations and indeterminations of our policy were entirely due to the weak character of our Sovereign, which made our foreign ministry a ship without sails or rudder. This fact, in conjunction with a domestic policy which was wholly reactionary and absolutely contrary to the sentiments of the majority of the Russian people, was to lead us irrevocably toward a revolution which was to engulf Russian Monarchy under the ruins of the Throne of Nicholas II.

## CHAPTER XI

THE ORIGIN OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION — THE  
MINISTERS, THE CLERGY, ABSENCE OF JUSTICE,  
DEPRIVATIONS OF RUSSIAN SOCIETY. GENERAL  
DISSATISFACTION

A REVOLUTIONARY movement was first visible in Russia in 1825, when Alexander I. died. The malcontents took advantage of the abdication of Alexander's successor, the Grand Duke Constantin, in favour of his brother Nicholas, to create a rising among the troops. They spread the report that the abdication had been forced by undue influence, and they hoped to create a constitutional government, which would replace the autocracy. The conspiracy fell through and Nicholas I. ascended the throne. There followed a reactionary reign of terror in Russia, and the flower of the military youth, all bearers of the highest names in Russia, paid for their daring in the awful cold and snows of Siberia!

This first revolutionary outbreak had not an anti-Czarist character. It was a constitutional movement. A few regiments, especially of the Imperial Guard, officered by men who belonged to the aristocracy of the country, supported the plot. But the people ignored it. Even the soldiers who took part in it understood next to nothing of what they were fighting for. They shouted: "Vive Constantin and the Constitution," believing that "Constitution" was the wife of Constantin!<sup>1</sup>

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During the reign of Nicholas I. the spirit of the revolution and many of the men who inspired it spread over Europe. The famous Herzen, the recognized leader of the movement, established himself in London, founded a newspaper office there, and beat his war drums against the Russian autocracy from the British capital. After the death of Nicholas I., his successor, Alexander II., inaugurated an era of reform. In 1861 he freed the serfs (peasants), who had been slaves until then. He abolished the use of the "knout" in the army and established a provincial system of self-government, the Zemstvos, and the jury system. In consequence the young Emperor became the idol of his people. Herzen wrote to him from London, "You have conquered me, Galilean!" Unfortunately this almost ideal condition of affairs did not last long! It was plain that the reforms instituted by the Emperor were the first steps towards abolishing autocracy. Russia awaited a constitution which would crown their monarch's efforts, but the Emperor stopped half way. Discontent followed, and the Emperor—instead of continuing his reforms—began to destroy those he had already instituted. In a very short time the whole nation was seething with revolutionary propaganda. The fanatics instituted a system of terrorism; ministers and provincial governors were assassinated in broad daylight, and finally Alexander II.—one of the best rulers Russia has ever had,—and to whom the people had given the name of "Liberator Czar," was blown to pieces by a bomb in one of the avenues of Petrograd on March 1st, 1881. The horror inspired in the majority of the Russian people by the murder of their sovereign greatly helped his successor, Alexander III., to institute a most reactionary policy.

There were, however, some further outbreaks, but these were suppressed quite easily, and once more the



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centre of the revolution moved elsewhere. When Nicholas II. ascended the throne in 1894, Russia was still waiting for a serious attempt to bring about liberal reforms. It was greatly hoped that Nicholas II. would continue the work of the first years of the reign of his grandfather, which was stopped throughout the reign of Alexander III. But Nicholas II. did nothing. He apparently decided to continue the reactionary *régime* of his father. He declared, "I wish to leave the country to my son even as I received it from my father." He surrounded himself with ultra-reactionary Ministers. Count Witte was probably the only exception, but even he, absorbed by financial reforms, held aloof from anything concerning the internal administration. The Zemstvos were badly handicapped. Justice was prostituted to the government's general policy. Discontent was general, and it was stimulated by a revolutionary propaganda, which was stirred up as much in foreign capitals as in Russia itself. Revolution was, even then, in the air, and only a favourable moment for a general outbreak was wanting. That moment came after the unfortunate war with Japan. The war had exposed all our weaknesses, and the rottenness of the government—both civil and military. The national pride of the people had been deeply wounded and the army was disgusted and sore.

The revolution broke out in Petrograd. A general strike was proclaimed, the capital was plunged in darkness, deprived of water, food and fuel. Railway transportation was paralysed. Petrograd was entirely isolated from the world. The Emperor Nicholas, nearly out of his mind with fear, issued the famous manifesto of October 17th, 1905, which gave to his people a kind of constitution. National representation through the Duma, freedom of speech, liberty of the individual, of conscience, meetings, and the press was proclaimed, and

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Count Witte became President of the reformed Council of Ministers, which took the place of the old Cabinet of Ministers of the days of autocracy. But the revolutionary movement, sweeping in full flood from Petrograd, reached Moscow. Count Witte, to dam the flood, wanted to try persuasion. But the Minister of the Interior, A. N. Dournovo, advised the Emperor to act more firmly. He promised to throttle the revolution in its infancy, and the Emperor approving, the revolution in Moscow was choked in blood! Count Witte promptly resigned, and reaction held high carnival all over Russia. The Duma tried to stem the ebb tide, but was dissolved twice, and twice reconstituted by fraudulent elections. Finally it was forced to capitulate.

From that moment the government went from bad to worse. Minister succeeded minister as water flows over a fall. The Empress came actively on the scene with all her scabby entourage, and the Emperor was only the shadow of a sovereign. At the beginning of the Great War, Nicholas seemed to win a certain degree of popularity. At that critical moment the Russian people supported their Monarch, and internal dissension was forgotten. But very soon serious disasters to the Russian armies threw a pitiless light on the instability of the Emperor and the fatuousness, weakness and corruption of the bureaucracy. Violent speeches were made, and still more violent scenes took place in the Duma. The Duma demanded direct participation in public affairs, but the Czar continued his fatal course. Then, for the first time, the trend of the revolution changed from the constitutional road it had followed up till this time and became openly anti-Czarist. Famine in Petrograd, deliberately staged by an imbecile minister, finally rung the curtain down on the drama of the Romanoffs on the 25th of February, 1917.

In order to understand the last act of this drama it is

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necessary to know the personalities and characteristics of the principal actors who played their part in it, from 1905, the date of the real revolution, to 1917, the year of the Emperor's abdication. The first to come on the stage was Count Witte, President of the first Council of Ministers under the so-called Constitutional Government. Although bearing a German name, he was a thorough Russian by birth and sentiment. He was a self-made man. When he was thirty-one he was still a station master on the Western Railroad of Russia. He offered a suggestion to the directors which doubled the receipts of the company, and was made a member of the company's executive. T. T. Wichnegradsky, then Minister of Finance, noticed Witte's work, and appointed him Superintendent-in-Chief of the Right of Way of Russian Railways. About a year later he was appointed Minister of Communications, and eleven months later succeeded Wichnegradsky as Minister of Finance. At that time he was barely forty. He was a man of quite unusual mentality, endowed with the practical imagination of a statesman who turns dreams into facts, ambitious, emotional, and determined. No obstacles were great enough to deter him when once he visualized his goal. In administering his department he piled reform on reform. To him Russia owed the introduction of gold coinage and the monopoly of alcohol. While he held office France lent Russia huge sums for development, and the foreign capitals began to rain money into our commercial enterprises.

The aristocracy regarded Witte as a parvenu. The bureaucracy envied his phenomenally rapid rise. They combined to plot his fall. But Witte was not easily caught. He scattered his enemies from his path, beating down some and buying others. He bought for the state, for double its value, a domain of Count Worontzoff-Dachkoff—Minister of the Court during the reign

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of Alexander III.—and he appointed Kokovtsoff his assistant minister, thus assuring himself of the vital support of these two statesmen. Having studied the evil side of human nature, Witte profoundly suspected and feared it. He said to me one day, “I am reproached with having corrupted society and with buying my people. I, the purchaser, am not to blame. The blame rests with a society so rotten that it permits itself to be bought! For the good of my country I hesitate at nothing.”

When Nicholas II. ascended the throne Witte was at the pinnacle of his power. As Minister of Finance, his influence was felt in every other department of the government. He made the same mistake with the Emperor that Bismarck made with the Emperor William. He treated the young monarch as a school-boy. It is said that at times he was vulgar and rude in his presence. Whenever the Emperor attempted to contradict him, he immediately presented his resignation, which he knew very well Nicholas did not dare accept. But when he fell he gave another illustration of how much he resembled Bismarck. He, like the famous German, lacked personal dignity in his disgrace. He criticized the Emperor, the government, and especially his successors, and began to cultivate the press, assiduously behaving like a caged lion. He had but one fixed idea, to regain power!

His opportunity came at the conclusion of peace between Russia and Japan. In the weak and politically impoverished ranks of our diplomatic service there was no striking personality who, by his name alone, could influence our adversary. Public opinion unanimously pointed to Witte as being the only man to whom the nation could confide its interests at so serious a time. Despite his personal antipathy to him, Nicholas appointed Witte First Minister-Plenipotentiary to the

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Portsmouth Conference. There in the realm of foreign affairs, which was an entirely new departure for him, he gave evidence of his remarkable abilities. Public opinion in the United States was far from being favourable to Russia owing to her treatment of the Jews. Japan had won American sympathy and financial support. It was therefore a problem of extreme importance to change the American view-point, and Witte gave it his first attention.

The Japanese plenipotentiaries wished first of all to discuss those clauses of the treaty on which they were determined to insist, and with which Russia could only comply if absolutely forced to do so. Witte, however, first took up the less important clauses which were more or less acceptable to Russia. In this way the American public began to think that Russia was ready to make any sacrifices in order to ensure the peace which the Americans ardently desired to see signed. Russia was thus fast regaining American sympathy when the time came to discuss those clauses to which Russia refused to consent, such, for instance, as a heavy indemnity. Witte's ground was already prepared. Public opinion began to accuse Japan of obstinacy and a desire to thwart peace. It was believed that if Russia was willing to give way on the first points, Japan might do as much for the remainder. In view of this, and not wishing to antagonize American opinion, the Japanese plenipotentiaries gave way. The Treaty of Portsmouth was not a very bad one for Russia !

Witte returned in great triumph to Russia. Emperor William made a point of meeting him as he passed through Berlin on his way to Petrograd. The German Emperor felt that Witte's star would again be in the ascendant, and he wished to win such a proven statesman and diplomat over to his own interests.

Witte had often been accused of being Germanophile.

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Witte was not Germanophile, Francophile or Anglophile—he was Russophile! The German Emperor, for all his attentions, was very far from having any personal sympathy with Witte. As a matter of fact, during the past years of Alexander III., and the first years of Nicholas II., when Witte was omnipotent, the Emperor William had been very afraid of him. He had learnt that here was a Russian statesman who could not be bullied by Germany. For example, the German Government, wanting to bring economic pressure to bear on Russia, prohibited the importation of Russian geese into Germany. Witte countered at once by an economic war, and began by prohibiting the importation of a series of articles of German manufacture which made a hole in the German budget of more than 18,000,000 roubles.

When Witte fell from power the first time the German Emperor was greatly pleased. After the Treaty of Portsmouth William believed he had won Witte to his point of view, but when he realized that this was not the case, he detested him more than ever, and the news of Witte's second downfall was greeted at Berlin with much joy.

Witte's whole policy, as he detailed it more than once to me after his fall, was : “ Russia must pursue a peaceful policy in order to increase her economic well-being. We can get on perfectly well with Germany by recognizing her rightful interests, and forcing her to respect ours. If William should become arrogant, we can make him lower his flag by means of our understanding with France. We must follow the same policy where England is concerned, as against her we can always count on having Germany at our disposal. The antagonism which exists between Germany and England is our trump card. Isvolsky made a grave mistake by bringing about the British understanding, and Sazonoff

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was still more wrong in permitting himself to be guided by that alliance. No good can come of it for Russia. We are not in a fit state for a war with Germany. Such a war, to succeed, must have a wholly national character. In order for a war to be national, we must have a popular sovereign. Nicholas II. is not popular, and therein lies the very gravest danger. A second unfortunate war for us might easily be the prelude to a revolution."

Such a political "credo" can hardly be called Germanophile in sentiment. It is that of a statesman with big ideas and a very wide outlook. I was very intimate with Witte, and saw him at least twice a week, and there was rarely a day when we did not speak by telephone. I think, therefore, that probably I knew him better than most people and could appreciate his fine qualities and realize his great faults. It was nothing but his desire to re-attain power at any price which alienated public opinion. He flattered the Imperial Court and assiduously cultivated the Grand Dukes and Statesmen who found favour in the eyes of the Sovereign. He was an habitu  of the aristocratic salons, and it is said did not even disdain Rasputin. It was in this way he alienated the Liberals. On the other hand he carefully cultivated the press and sought the friendship and esteem of the Duma, and so alienated the Court and high bureaucracy. When he died (1915) he had been for a long time without any political support whatsoever, and with only a very few intimate friends. And yet, during the last years of his life, when he mounted the tribune of the Council of State, everyone present listened to him with serious attention.

Only a few years before his death Witte miraculously escaped an attempt against his life. An infernal machine had been placed in the chimney of his study, which was fortunately noticed by his servant, who was about to light a fire. A judicial investigation

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followed. It was established that the conspiracy had been hatched by the party of Extreme Reaction (Black Bands). Despite the insistence of Witte, the matter was hushed up. More than that, when the Count, at his wife's insistence, asked for a detective to protect him in future, the police chose a man for the position who belonged to the Black Bands, and who shortly afterwards was found assassinated by order of the revolutionary committee as an admitted spy. Witte told me that the so-called guardian of his person was neither more nor less than another assassin sent by his enemies ! Such were the means used by the Black Band when it tried to get rid of its opponents.

Witte's many enemies whispered to Nicholas II. that the retired statesman was aiming at becoming president of a Russian Republic. It was an infamous lie. Witte was a thorough Czarist, but he desired that Czarism should be supported by a more or less Liberal Constitution. He was very proud of the Imperial manifesto of the 17th October. He said to me : " Nicholas may detest me as much as he likes, but he will never be able to destroy the letter he wrote me when the manifesto was issued ! I insisted that his letter be published at the same time as the manifesto, and I have ordered it to be engraved on my tombstone ! The Russian people will at last know the part I played at that time ! "

Such was the man Nicholas II. dismissed on two occasions as he would a valet ! I do not believe that during the last half century Russia has had a statesman his equal.

Ivan Loganovitch Goremikine, who succeeded Witte as president of the Council of Ministers, was the complete antithesis of his predecessor. He was an aristocrat whose family had always played some part in the history of Russia since the days of Ivan the Terrible. He had



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had a long bureaucratic career, and had held among other offices the Ministry of the Interior. It would be unjust to call him a reactionary. He approached more nearly to the type of the English Tory. He instinctively regarded administration as government by law. If the law was bad then it could be changed, but as long as the law was on the statute books it must be obeyed absolutely. One day he said to me :

“When I was Minister of the Interior the general opinion was that I was a Liberal. I was given the name of the Red Flag Minister. Yet in 1906, when I was president of the Council for the first time, everybody thought me a reactionary. I am neither a reactionary nor a radical. I am a man who stands by the law.”

Such sentiments were a serious fault in any minister who desired to succeed during such times. A law which served in the Russia of 1900 could not serve the needs of 1906. Russia was suffering the birth-pangs of a new era. Her doctors diagnosed her case as the bad temper of a child.

Goremikine was very badly received by the Duma, which desired above all to emphasize its independence. Directly he attempted to speak, cat-calls and shrill whistles resounded everywhere. The Emperor had two courses open to him. He could dissolve the Duma, or he could form a constitutional ministry with its assistance. The Democratic Constitutional Party (Cadets) was so sure of obtaining power that a list of ministers was made out in which appeared the name of Miliukoff as premier and foreign minister. The Emperor, hearing of this, summoned the Council of State to discuss the situation. The majority of the Council pronounced in favour of a constitutional government. Goremikine and Stolypin, the Minister of the Interior in his cabinet, urged dissolution. When the Council was dismissed the Emperor requested Goremi-

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kine to wait, and then expressed to him his chagrin with the sentiments expressed by the majority. He asked Goremikine what could be done. The latter replied :

“ I do not change my opinion. The present constitution gives you the right to decide whether you will dissolve the Duma or accede to the sentiment of the majority. You are the master and must make your choice. The Duma has entirely overstepped its rights and must be put in its place.”

The Emperor bowed his head in his hands and stood thus for some minutes in deep reflection. He then went slowly up to Goremikine. Making the sign of the cross, he exclaimed :

“ In God’s name dissolve the Duma ; I entirely agree with your point of view.”

After his interview with the Emperor, Goremikine drafted the proclamation dissolving the Duma and went direct to the state printer and ordered it to be printed and immediately issued. He found there a proclamation of the Cadet Party to the people anticipating the formation of a really constitutional cabinet by the Emperor. He personally confiscated the proofs and took them to his house in his carriage. One of his most striking qualities was his calmness at critical times. He was not in the least disturbed, though of course he realized the gravity of the situation. He dined with his family quietly and afterwards smoked and played solitaire as usual, without showing any signs of perturbation. He then retired. At half-past eleven a special courier came from the Emperor with a message to the effect that Nicholas had changed his mind. He desired the minister to cancel the proclamation of dissolution, and requested him to come to Tsarskoe Selo the next day at eleven in the morning.

Goremikine sent his valet to the courier with a

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message that the Minister was not well and was asleep, but that the message would be delivered when he awoke. But Goremikine carefully did nothing, and next day, to the Emperor's stupefaction, there appeared the decree of dissolution. The Minister went to Tsarskoe Selo as requested, and told the Emperor he regretted the mistake, and blamed his valet, who had not desired to awaken him. He then presented his resignation, which the Emperor refused to accept.

Demonstrations against the government were prepared for. But the public in general was tired of revolutionary disorders and almost welcomed the dissolution of the Duma. The members of the Cadet Party fled to Viborg, in Finland, and from there issued their proclamation to the people. It fell absolutely flat.

Goremikine, however, was obdurate. He again presented his resignation, telling the Emperor that any opprobrium for the dissolution which might come later ought to fall on him, who was really to blame, and insisted that his resignation be accepted. The Emperor finally gave way, and at Goremikine's request appointed Stolypin to succeed him. Knowing Stolypin's character, it always seemed to me, in thinking this matter over, that Goremikine had a grim sense of humour.

The new President of the Council before serving as Minister of the Interior had been governor of Saratoff, on the Volga. He was relatively a young man, about forty-five, very ambitious, astute, determined, but inclined to be narrow-minded and provincial. His critics nicknamed him "The Governor of All the Russias,"—he ruled Russia as if it were Saratoff. As president of the Council he pursued an ultra-nationalistic policy, and this naturally led to the further estrangement of the Poles and Finns. He was supported in this

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policy by the *Novoe Vremya*, of which his brother was a director.

When he discovered that there was no outburst of sympathy and apparently no regret for the departed Duma, he was anxious to appropriate all the credit for the dissolution, and openly boasted of his success in preventing "stupid constitutional reforms." He was to receive a lesson on the folly of vanity.

Meanwhile Goremikine, the real author of the Duma's downfall, was staying with me at my villa at Tegernsee and together we visited Paris, Goremikine enjoying his freedom from office and state affairs with all the abandonment of youth. He was intensely amused when he heard that Stolypin was appropriating a responsibility which he himself had felt to be most serious and from which he was only too anxious to escape. His amusement, however, was changed to regret when we heard that Stolypin's residence in Petrograd had been destroyed by a bomb, and that Stolypin himself only escaped death by a miracle, as he fell from the second floor to the ground floor, yet only received some bruises and scratches. Twenty people were killed and wounded and the Minister's children were badly hurt.

Stolypin's first act was to arrange for elections to the Duma. He was determined that the new Duma should not be impregnated with the radicalism of the Cadets, and relied on the Peasants, Clericals and Conservatives to give that support to the Government which was so plainly lacking in the first Duma. He succeeded in attaining his object as far as the arrangement of the parties was concerned, but he soon discovered that he had overreached himself. The Peasants and Clericals turned out to be infinitely more revolutionary than the Cadets, and a Socialist plot against the Czar in the Duma itself was nipped in the bud. Stolypin thereupon dissolved the second Duma, and the Socialistic members

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concerned in the plot were brought before a judge and banished to Siberia. Among them was Tseretelli, who after the revolution became a cabinet minister in Kerensky's government.

By the use of even more unscrupulous methods in the elections the third Duma proved a docile instrument in the hands of the Minister. The majority was in the hands of a new party, the Octobrist, which was constitutional, but not so advanced as the Cadets. But Stolypin was even now not content. He wanted more and more power, and even the mild criticism of the Octobrists spurred him to reaction. He formed a party, which was called Nationalist, and through this party instituted a new reactionary campaign against the Jews, Finns and Poles. In this policy he was violently supported by the *Novoe Vremya*, which during this entire period earned for itself a bad reputation. It always supported the power "in being," whether good or bad, and had no principles outside this policy. One of the greatest Russian satirists, Soltikoff (Tchedrine), gave the paper the name of "What-you-Will."

In consequence extreme discontent arose throughout Russia. The Jews, Finns and Poles combined with the Intellectuals against Stolypin. Opposition only seemed to make him more determined. He became more and more reactionary and unscrupulous in his use of authority to suppress any opposition, although in the Duma he still kept his ascendancy owing to his magnificent oratory and appearance. But the more he stamped on the embers of revolution in one place, the more he used the weapons of reaction and encouraged the Black Bands, the stronger grew the sentiment against him and his government. Finally he was assassinated by a Jew named Bagroff, in the presence of the Emperor and Empress, at a gala performance in the theatre of Kiev.

Had he escaped the assassin's shot, his political

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assassination was certain. He had already been condemned by the Emperor, who had been persuaded by Stolypin's enemies that the Minister was leading Russia on the road to ruin. His resignation was only a matter of days. His assassin afterwards declared that his real intent had been to kill the Emperor, and that it was only at the last moment he had decided to murder the Premier instead! Thus Stolypin died, as a matter of fact, for his sovereign! But despite this the Emperor did not attend the funeral of his Minister, giving as his excuse that on that day he had promised to review the main body of troops just outside the city.

This pretence again shows the character of the Emperor! The ingratitude of Nicholas equalled his weakness.

A monument was erected to Stolypin at Kiev, but it was destroyed in the final revolution.

While he had been in power, Stolypin was forced to accept as Minister of Finance Count Kokovtsoff, a strong political adversary. The Emperor insisted upon this appointment, faithful to his principle, *divide et impera*. Kokovtsoff now succeeded to the presidency of the Council.

This statesman had had a long bureaucratic career. Born of an impoverished family of the lesser nobility, he owed his success to his own zeal and intelligence, though perhaps more especially to his intimate knowledge of finance. As has been already stated, for a time he had been an antagonist of Count Witte, but the latter bought his assistance by appointing him Vice-Minister of Finance, and Kokovtsoff became one of his principal collaborators and assistants in all his projects.

Later Kokovtsoff became Minister of Finance, and held the position for ten years. Although he was most intelligent, he was very narrow-minded. The wide horizons which mark the great statesman were abso-

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lutely lacking in him. A remarkable "Budgetist," all his efforts were bent on increasing the wealth of the State. He wrangled over every penny of credits which other ministers requested, and naturally the State suffered. A wit once compared him to a certain beggar in Montmartre, one of the poorest quarters in Paris, who was starved to death in his attic and in whose mattress 15,000 francs were found after his death.

Kokovtsoff was a great orator. He could speak for hours together on *any* subject, and was always an enthusiastic admirer of his own verbosity. Witte, with whom he had quarrelled a second time, called him "a lark."

"He is a bird that sings very well, but otherwise is not worth much."

Kokovtsoff did not lack character. For instance, when Witte sent him to Paris, after the Russo-Japanese war, to arrange for a loan, he succeeded despite the opposition of Clemenceau, the then powerful Minister of Interior of the French Government. Meeting with such opposition, Kokovtsoff did not hesitate to threaten Clemenceau with the fact that if the projected loan were refused by France he would declare Russia bankrupt!

Clemenceau said to me: "Your Kokovtsoff is not a minister! He is a blackmailer of the first water!" But he agreed to the loan!

In his relations with the Duma, Kokovtsoff tried to be as conciliatory as possible, but his efforts were not often crowned with success. He had no party on which he could effectively rely. Towards the end of his tenure of office he staged an excellent burlesque. He had entirely stopped appearing in the Duma, and ordered all the other Ministers to do the same! It was a sort of strike of the Ministers against the Duma.

Kokovtsoff's greatest quality was his unimpeachable

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honesty, which he maintained in his private affairs as well as in matters of state. In this respect he distinguished himself as being far above the Russian statesmen of the last years of the Monarchy. He had *flatly* refused to meet the Court favourite, Rasputin, and the latter avenged himself by becoming one of the prime movers in his downfall. From his father he had inherited a small property not far from Petrograd. When he resigned this little property was all that he possessed in the world.

In dismissing him, the Emperor offered him a gift of 300,000 roubles, but Kokovtsoff refused it, saying to the Emperor that his appointment as a member of the Council of the Empire amply sufficed for his modest tastes and needs.

Instead of appreciating this rare quality in a Russian statesman, Nicholas was seemingly much annoyed by it. After his retirement, the Sovereign always avoided seeing Kokovtsoff, and the only time that he did receive him was because it could not be avoided.

While he was in power, Kokovtsoff had not foreseen the revolution. He continued to hope that by concessions to the Duma the existing state of things could be made to last, at least until the end of the great war. He changed his mind after his resignation, however. Having re-entered private life, he naturally came in contact with all kinds and conditions of people. He was frankly spoken to by all sides, and thus obtained a far better idea of Russian sentiment in general.

I knew Kokovtsoff when I was a young man, and had always been very intimate with him. For a certain time while he was in power our relations were troubled, for my newspaper opposed him. After his resignation, however, we returned to the old friendly basis, and I saw him very often.

He was always very sad and quiet, and did not hide



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from me that he felt the Court had, on his advice, followed a fatal policy. He *then* foresaw the revolution clearly, and said so, too, that it was not far distant—even that it would take place before the war was over. Of Nicholas he remarked :

“ The Emperor obstinately refuses to see anything, or permit himself to be shown anything. He seems as if he were still drunk with the ovations he received at the time of the fêtes of the 300th Anniversary of the Romanoff dynasty. He does not hear the grumbling of the coming revolution because of the cheers of the multitude. If he insists upon surrounding himself with such indolent ministers as Goremikine, and with such scamps as Sturmer and Rasputin, the end is near at hand.”

Unfortunately Kokovtsoff did not impart his opinions to any but his most intimate friends. He did not act, neither did he try to influence the Court. When the Emperor learned by accident of his point of view and appeared interested in it, he was slyly informed that Kokovtsoff still rankled over his dismissal from office and that therein might be found the real key to his ideas and actions.

His well-known honesty saved Count Kokovtsoff at the time of the revolution. He was not even arrested, as were most of the ministers of the old *régime*.

To the stupefaction of all political circles, Goremikine was appointed successor to Kokovtsoff. Goremikine was seventy-seven years old, and had the general reputation of a reactionary. By his nomination it seemed plain that the Emperor intended, if possible, to pursue a still more autocratic policy. The Emperor gave immediate proof of this when he summoned a council of the ministers, over which he himself presided. At this conference he told the council that it must look to Goremikine for everything, as he had the utmost confidence

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in him and was determined to support him in every way possible. Goremikine, immediately after the council, requested the members of the press to wait upon him, and told them that he was determined to follow a policy which would have the approval of the Duma, if the Duma in its turn gave him the necessary support. To do this, however, he must have time, as circumstances were such as to make it most difficult to bring about such reforms as the Duma demanded without running the risk of destroying the fabric of Russian government. The Duma received this declaration without enthusiasm, but in a not unfriendly spirit. Goremikine was somewhat encouraged thereby, as it was a very different reception to that which he had experienced the first time he had been president of the cabinet.

Goremikine intimated that he would dismiss Soukhominloff, the Minister of War, Maklakoff, the Minister of the Interior, and Tcheglowitoff, the Minister of Justice, all of whom were very much disliked by the Duma and Liberal circles in Russia. Unfortunately Goremikine was an extreme procrastinator. He always put off till to-morrow the things he should have done to-day. His characteristic indolence had increased with his years, and all three ministers remained in office despite his seeming promise to purge Russia of their disastrous influence. One evening I was dining *en famille* with Goremikine and strongly criticized the policy of the three ministers, especially that of Soukhominloff. Goremikine said nothing at the moment, but afterwards, just as I was going home, he said :

“ You are quite right, my dear friend, but have patience. You must not forget it is necessary to manage the Emperor.”

I replied : “ Take care, Ivan Loganovitch, that when you think the time is ripe to manage the Emperor you do not find that he is no longer the Emperor.”

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Goremikine answered sadly : " I know,—I know what you mean, but you know my sentiments regarding him. I have too much affection for him. I have known him too long."

In these words Goremikine summed up a situation I knew only too well. Witte had said to me on one occasion that Goremikine was nothing but " a *maître d'hôtel* " to the Emperor. But this was not true. The old statesman regarded his master with the affection a man may feel towards a youth who has been his pupil. He knew and deplored the weaknesses of the Emperor, but he could not find it in his heart to deal drastically with him. He spoilt him always, hoping that in time the good qualities he saw in his pupil would overcome the weakness of his character. One day he severely criticized the Emperor to my sister, especially with regard to his folly regarding Rasputin. He said :

" The Emperor knows my affection for him, and yet he treats me as if I were his *valet de chambre*."

My sister replied : " Yes, but if the Emperor recalls you, you will go to him just as a dog to the whistle of his master."

Goremikine answered : " You are right, but what can I do ? I love him and I can refuse him nothing."

It was clear that this sentiment of Goremikine, combined with his indolence and age, would create an impossible situation. It became no longer a question of reform, but of expediency—that fatal weakness in all politics and diplomacy. The ministers did as they pleased in their departments and the cabinet was not united on any definite policy, and when in due course Goremikine was told that ministers were blundering, he took refuge in ignorance. " I do not know what they do," he would cry. He forgot he was entrusted with full powers. He was like a stage manager who refuses to be responsible for the interpretation of their parts

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by the actors. It was as though he staged a drama and then sat in a box and criticized it. Goremykine sat comfortably in his chair and exclaimed :

“ Eh ! but this is a horrible play. It bores me. Why did I ever come to see it ? ”

Usually at cabinet councils he slept. In the evenings when he should have been hard at work he played solitaire. The most powerful minister in Russia played solitaire while Russia slid into the abyss !

Once, however, Goremykine showed a flash of his old self. After Austria sent the ultimatum to Serbia and mobilized, Goremykine called a meeting of the cabinet. He told the ministers that they must make up their minds to the course Russia must pursue if Germany and Austria were determined on war. A hot discussion followed, and Goremykine went to sleep. One minister after the other spoke, and the majority were in favour of coming to some understanding with Austria and Germany, if possible. Suddenly Goremykine opened his eyes and said :

“ Well, gentlemen, I have heard all you have to say, and will tell the Emperor that you have unanimously decided we must stand by Serbia to the end. Our honour is at stake.”

He then went to the Emperor and suggested that everything possible must be done to preserve peace, and as a result Sazonoff, the Foreign Minister, sent a circular telegram to our ambassadors in Paris, London and Berlin, asking for the friendly intervention of those powers between Russia and Austria. The Emperor Nicholas sent a personal telegram to the Emperor William, suggesting the same thing. But what happened is well known. Sir Edward Grey proposed a conference, which was accepted by France and Russia, but refused by Germany. Emperor William, after having prepared for war for forty-four years, encouraged

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Austria to stand fast. When Austria finally realized that Russia would not abandon Serbia, Count Szapary, her ambassador in Petrograd, was instructed to see Sazonoff and endeavour to gain time. Meanwhile, however, Russia had ordered the mobilization of her southern and western armies at Kiev, Warsaw and Odessa against Austria, in reply to the mobilization of the latter. Despite the peaceful efforts of the French, Russian and English cabinets, the Emperor William, being afraid some arrangement might be come to, ordered the secret mobilization of Germany. By mistake this was disclosed by the *Lokal Anzeiger* of Berlin. The paper was promptly suppressed, but in Russia the secret was already known, and orders were given for general mobilization. Immediately there came from Berlin the German ultimatum demanding the demobilization of all Russian forces in twelve hours, which was followed by the declaration of war against Russia and France.

At the beginning of the war the Emperor Nicholas desired to nominate himself commander-in-chief of Russia's troops, but Goremykin insisted that the Grand Duke Nicholas be appointed to the supreme command. In consequence, when he came to the Duma and told the deputies what had been done, he was received enthusiastically for the first time in his official career.

Henceforward Goremykin's whole policy was directed to making every sacrifice necessary to win the war. He had determined that on no account must there be any patched-up peace. He said to me :

"If we lose Warsaw, Petrograd, and even Moscow, and retire to the Volga, we must never make peace until militarism has been destroyed."

But unfortunately Goremykin forgot that in order to win the war it must be popular, and to be popular

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the government must be in agreement with the people, especially in its domestic policies.

This was impossible as long as the Emperor was surrounded by such men as Rasputin, Maklakoff and Tcheglowitoff, and under the entire influence of the Empress, all of which the people knew perfectly well. The liberal and progressive influences, which were perfectly ready to assist the government in every way possible, were regarded by this clique as revolutionary. The discontent of the people became ever greater and greater, and yet when I told Goremikine we were heading straight for a revolution, he only replied :

"That is all nonsense. Reform is necessary, but it must come after the war. As for revolution, it is nothing but the dust on the healthy body of Russia. When I breathe on it it will disappear."

What must have been the thoughts of the old statesman, when, after the revolution, seated in a motor-car accompanied by soldiers and workmen, and spat upon by the people, he was escorted hatless through the streets of Petrograd, with the thermometer thirty below zero, to the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul ?

Goremikine's fall was entirely unexpected by him. When the former Assistant-Minister of the Interior, Beletsky, who was in close relationship with the court and with Rasputin, informed him that the Emperor had determined to replace him with Sturmer, Goremikine replied :

"That is impossible. He might ask for my resignation, but he never could replace me with such a nonentity as Sturmer."

On the day before his dismissal the Empress actually wrote to Madame Goremikine, who showed me the letter, saying, "As long as your dear husband is at the head of affairs we sleep soundly. He takes good care of Russia and of us."

## THE ORIGIN OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Such was the despicable treachery of the Emperor and his court to those who served and loved him.

Goremikine's end was tragic. Eighty years old, he was assassinated at Sotche, in the Caucasus, with his wife, who was over seventy, and his son-in-law, General Ovtchinnikoff, by the Bolsheviki. Of all the ministers during the reign of Nicholas, he and Witte had the greatest individuality and independence. He should have held the office of foreign minister. He had the great quality of resistance, which none of the other ministers had.

Count Witte, who was personally antagonistic to him, said to me one day, when the question of the nomination of Goremikine as Minister of Foreign Affairs was mooted :

“Goremikine would make an ideal foreign minister, and if he comes into power, I will try and obtain from him an ambassadorship to Constantinople. I would like to work with him.”

One of Russia's greatest tragedies was the fact that Goremikine and Witte never united to form a party. They each criticized the other instead of uniting to criticize the government.

When he was dismissed, Goremikine might well have cried with Louis Quatorze : “Après moi le déluge.”

## CHAPTER XII

### THE DELUGE

WHEN Sturmer was appointed as his successor, the Court and its intimates made no ceremony or fuss about the new President of the Council. For the most part the Emperor absented himself from Petrograd, and spent most of his time at Army Headquarters at the front. To all intents and purposes it was the Empress reigned, and in consequence Rasputin became the dispenser of Russia's destiny.

Sturmer was a man of his making. He treated him as dirt beneath his feet, and sent him his orders written on filthy scraps of paper. The administrator of the Russo-French Bank asked me one day, knowing of my friendly relations with Prince Obolensky, Commander of Petrograd, to intercede with him in favour of a Jewess, a relative of one of the employés of the Bank, whom Obolensky was going to expel from the city, but he refused my request categorically.

"Hair will grow on my head before I will permit her to stay in Petrograd!" he exclaimed. (The Prince was entirely bald.)

I told the unhappy Jewess of the non-success of my mission, and advised her to try and see Rasputin. This she did. Rasputin interested himself in her case, and gave her one of the famous slips of soiled paper to give Sturmer. I was shown the slip and took



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a copy of it ! And this is the message that Rasputin sent the President of the Council :

“DEAR BORIS VLADIMIROVITCH” (Sturmer’s Christian name), “I send you this woman. Do as she wishes.

“Your well-wisher,

“GREGORY RASPUTIN.”

Sturmer hastened to send the necessary orders to Prince Obolensky, and the Jewess was permitted to continue her residence in the capital. On the night of the gala dinner given for Messieurs Viviani and Thomas, who had come to Petrograd on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Franco-Russian Alliance, I chanced to sit beside Prince Obolensky. I said to him :

“Well, *mon Prince*—I do not see that your hair has grown !”

The Prince did not seem to relish my little joke !

Sturmer thought of nothing except of keeping his own position. He had as his private secretary a person called Manuiloff—a man of very shady reputation, who shortly after was condemned to a year in prison for blackmail. The secretary’s duties lay chiefly in keeping the Minister informed of the sentiments and opinions current in political circles. For this work Manuiloff drew 12,000 roubles per year, to say nothing of supplementary credits and the sums of money given to him. At the same time—an excellent illustration of our *régime* in those days—he drew 6,000 roubles a year from the Assistant-Minister of the Interior to spy on *Sturmer* !

Conditions were so bad that one might well imagine oneself transported to Constantinople before the war—where the same sort of agents served at one and the same time the interests of Kiamel Pasha (Grand Vizier) and of Enver Pasha, who was his most deadly enemy !

## THE GAME OF DIPLOMACY

Sturmer was still Minister of the Interior, and in that department everyone did exactly as he pleased. The Provincial Governors had become mere satraps; justice existed on paper only. Solely occupied with his own affairs, Sturmer did not even take the time or trouble to read the official reports! When he finally vacated the Ministry to become Minister of Foreign Affairs, still keeping the presidency of the Council he was replaced by A. D. Protopopoff, whose activities surpassed those of Sturmer in arbitrariness and glaring abuse of his office.

Sturmer tried to get on good terms with the Duma, and as it had been dissolved by Goremikine, he at once reconvened it. Then he influenced the Emperor to visit the Duma. Nicholas went and made a speech. He assured the deputies of his well-wishes, asked them to work for the country's good in accord with their sovereign in the difficult times which they were then passing through. This speech was enthusiastically received, but the deputies were disappointed in their hopes. The Emperor had spoken to them, it is true, in a very fatherly and kind way, but he had promised them nothing! The country wanted a *responsible* ministry that would be answerable to the Duma for its actions, or for at least a practical execution of the promises made in the Imperial Manifesto of 17th October, 1905, but since entirely forgotten.

Nicholas would not even sacrifice the iniquitous Protopopoff, Minister of the Interior, for them, although he was universally hated in Russia.

It was, then, only natural that after the Emperor left the Duma, violent speeches against the Government and criticisms of the Ministry were heard on every side. Two or three days later Miliukoff thundered from the tribune the truth of the evils under which unhappy Russia was groaning and suffering.

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Sturmer's Cabinet was so wretchedly constituted that among all its members there was not *one* man who could answer Miliukoff's terrible denunciation and charges. Sturmer had recourse to the old method: he proceeded forthwith to the dissolution of the Duma, but the deputies, when they returned to their constituencies, exposed the rottenness of the Government in great detail, and discontent spread fast and far.

In his relations with the court, Sturmer was fawning and servile. As he had been Master of Ceremonies for many years, he knew it in all its devious ways. German by birth, his father a Protestant by religion, Sturmer posed as a convinced Orthodox. He visited all the churches regularly, and assiduously sought friends among the highest church dignitaries, as he knew that in so doing he would win the favours of the Empress, whom he influenced by the most insidious flattery.

It would be ridiculous to speak of Sturmer's "politics" or "policy," as he had neither the one nor the other. He lived from day to day executing the ever-vacillating wishes of the Czar. He signed any treaty put before him. One was as good as another to him, and the same slipshod way of doing things was the rule in the Foreign Office as had distinguished his administration at the Ministry of the Interior. He was always ready either to bargain with the deputies, or attack them virulently. As he came to power, so he fell from it, by a caprice, pure and simple, of the Czar, or better, of the Empress. He had been accused by Miliukoff before the whole Duma of having been a thief while in power. Miliukoff stated that even if he had not himself stolen, which could not be proved, it was certain his wife and sons were most seriously compromised.

Miliukoff's attack, however, was not the real reason

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of his fall, which was solely due to the caprice of his Sovereign. Matters were so rotten at Court that an open attack on a Minister by the Duma only strengthened his position with the Sovereigns! Imperial favours were a sure reward for the hatred of the deputies!

The last President of the Ministerial Council under Nicholas II. was Prince Golitzin. His nomination was unexpected, not only by the public at large, but even by himself. He had been the governor of two provinces, and a Senator, and his last position had been that of a member of the Imperial Council. He always voted with the party of the Extreme Right. He was seventy-two years old when he attained the highest office. He was a gentleman in every sense of the term, loyal and honest, but totally ignorant of affairs of State. He was the President of two societies for the furtherance of the public welfare, one of which had as its patron the Empress Alexandra, and the other the Dowager Empress Marie. Although the two Empresses did not get on at all well together, and were entirely unlike in character, Prince Golitzin managed to retain the favour of both. He came to the palace to make his report to the Empress one day, when he found himself unexpectedly face to face with the Emperor, who promptly offered him Sturmer's position as head of the Council! The Prince confided to my sister Sementovsky that he had done all he could to keep this bitter cup from his lips! He did not feel strong enough to assume such a heavy responsibility, and did not hide this from the Emperor, giving him a long list of candidates for the position whom he thought to be far better fitted. But it was all in vain. The Emperor insisted, and the Prince became President of the Council.

In political circles everyone was highly amused by

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his appointment, and the Prince was not taken at all seriously. The Duma expected an uproar the first time Prince Golitzin appeared, especially as he relied on the infamous Protopopoff's assistance. But the Prince dared not attempt the experience! He kept away from the Duma, and in this way the deputies had no idea of the policy he intended to follow.

The Golitzin Ministry lasted just one month. By order of the Emperor, who was then at the front, the Prime Minister signed a decree of dissolution. The Duma refused to be dissolved, and the Revolution broke out!

The unfortunate Prince left his official quarters and took refuge in my sister's house, where he lived before he became Prime Minister. But as the other tenants very much feared the mobs, they begged my sister to make him leave. Prince Golitzin, a gentleman always, at once telephoned to the President of the Duma to come and arrest him. He was at once incarcerated in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, but was soon freed. Of all the Czar's ministers, he was perhaps one who suffered most from his master's capricious whims.

Meanwhile, Protopopoff, the Minister of the Interior, who played such a disastrous part during the last days of the monarchy in Russia, had flitted on and off the stage. Just before the curtain descended he became one of the principal actors in the drama.

In all countries the Minister of the Interior occupies a very important position. In Russia the holder of this portfolio has always been almost omnipotent! The whole administration of the internal affairs of the vast Empire was absolutely in his hands. He appointed the governors of provinces, and controlled the activities of the Zemstvos. He regulated all questions except those of religion. By custom, the Minister of the Interior was a high dignitary, having the full confidence

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of the Sovereign, and being "his man" in every way. During the reign of Nicholas II., the Ministry of the Interior especially reflected the vacillating character of the ruler. And it was in this important branch of the Government that ministers were most frequently changed, so much so that during the last months of the monarchy the Ministry of the Interior was nothing but a continuous moving picture! The Emperor called for someone, it did not matter who, and offered him the post of Minister of the Interior. The gentleman so "honoured" accepted, and went home, highly delighted, to dilate on his good fortune to his family! This would happen in the morning; and the evening of the same day the Czar changed his mind, *another* man was appointed, and the appointee of the morning had not even had time to make the acquaintance of his colleagues.

The innumerable Ministers of the Interior kept their positions not by their policies or accomplishments, but solely by Imperial favour! They all tried to secure such favour by all sorts of means, *any* means sufficed, *as long as they were successful*. Some, Sturmer, for instance, by making a round of all the churches, others, like Maklakoff, in imitating the "leap of the amorous pantheress," which made the Empress and the Imperial children laugh, and a third class, like Protopopoff, by flattering the Empress, and doing things they claimed were spiritualistic. And *all* by first assuring themselves of being in the very good graces of Rasputin.

Of all the Ministers of the Interior that Nicholas II. had, Protopopoff contributed the most to the fall of the Monarchy. He was a gentleman from the Province of Simbirsk, on the Volga. Previously he had been an officer, but left the army when he was still young. He was very rich, an extensive landowner, and was at

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the head of several industrial enterprises. He had worked in several of the Zemstvo bureaus, and had been elected chief of the nobility in his home province. He thus represented his province in the third and fourth Duma, belonging to the Octobrist Party. Finally he was Vice-President of the Duma. His speeches were usually of a pronouncedly liberal character. An excellent orator, and most insinuating in his manner, he made himself very popular with the deputies, especially by his violent attacks on the Government.

When a delegation from the Duma visited the capitals of our Allies, Protopopoff was of the party. As he spoke English, French and Italian fluently, he spoke for the whole delegation. He produced an exceedingly good impression in Europe, and was very popular everywhere. On his return to Russia he passed through Stockholm with Count Olsouiev, Member of the Imperial Council, who had also been a member of the deputation. In the Swedish capital the latter discovered a Russian journalist, Kolischko by name, who lived there as he would not leave his mistress, who was a German whom the Russian Government had expelled. Naturally enough, Germany and its affairs were among the topics of conversation, and Count Olsouiev expressed a desire to see a real German, in order to learn something of German sentiments. Kolischko offered his assistance, and at a luncheon at his house introduced a man by the name of Warburg to the Count. Warburg was a German financier, a friend of Herr Ballin, and in consequence in touch with the ideas of Emperor William.

At the last moment Protopopoff expressed a wish to be present at this luncheon, and so was asked. Although the conversation did not have any great political significance, Protopopoff was fatuous enough to mention it to a reporter, adding that it was he, and

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not Olsouiev, who had arranged for the meeting with Warburg.

The matter got abroad, and when Protopopoff reached Petrograd, he found that his position in the Duma was seriously compromised, even in the ranks of his own party. The President of the Duma, M. W. Rodzianko, wrote him a letter in which he asked him, in the name of the Duma, to present formal explanations regarding the Stockholm incident. In order to excuse himself, Protopopoff threw all the blame on Olsouiev ; but the latter succeeded in clearing himself, and proved conclusively that Protopopoff was a liar.

He had formerly been the Liberal candidate for the post of Minister of Commerce, but after this incident there was no doubt that not only would he lose his position as Vice-President of the Duma, but even that of being a deputy !

Protopopoff was more fortunate at Court. Wanting to know the details of the visit of the delegation to the Allied capitals, the Emperor received him in the Empress' presence. Protopopoff made a very good impression.

The Empress asked him if King George resembled the Emperor as much as it was commonly reported. Protopopoff answered :

“ Only as a bad copy resembles a superb original.”

This reply pleased the Emperor and Empress immensely.

Seeing that he was done for, as far as the Duma was concerned, Protopopoff decided to make himself popular at Court. He listened to Rasputin and made himself most agreeable, and employed the same tactics with the Archbishop of Petrograd. As he had prepared the ground carefully at the Palace, he was appointed Minister of the Interior.

At first he played up to the Liberals. He argued



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to himself that the title of "Minister of the Interior and Deputy of the Duma" would make him popular with the masses, and that it might win him once again the support of the Duma. But his calculations were wrong ! His own Party voted for his exclusion !

He then became a violent reactionary.

He included in the police a number of non-commissioned officers of the army, on whom he could rely. By this means the force of police in the capital reached the total of 18,000 men. He also ordered all the cross streets to be guarded with machine guns and the roofs of all the higher buildings to be similarly equipped, and he explained his orders by calling attention to the possibility of a German air-raid on the capital. His idea was to force the revolution into the open, provoke the working classes and then mow them down. To achieve this object he ordered, on the 23rd of February, 1917, that no bread should be sold in those parts of the city inhabited by the workmen and the poor. On the 24th of February there were mass meetings of the starving crowds, who howled for bread. These meetings were easily dispersed by the police ; but, on the 25th, the movement suddenly became revolutionary. The garrisons of Petrograd were in collision with the people, and there followed a massacre of the police. About 5,000 people were killed and Protopopoff's "army" fled, or was arrested by the revolting troops. The revolution had won the day in Petrograd !

Protopopoff fled and took refuge in a village near the capital, but fearing to be recognized and killed, four days later he presented himself to the Duma. Meeting Kerensky there, he said to him :

"Excellency, have pity on me !" To which Kerensky replied :

"In the first place, I am not 'Excellency !' As to your crimes against the nation, the people will judge them."

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He was arrested and incarcerated in St. Peter and St. Paul. He narrowly escaped being torn to pieces by the mobs while he was being taken there.

Goremikine and Sturmer, the one by his inaction, the other by his actions, played their parts in the last scene of the drama, but it was Protopopoff who rung the curtain down.

Justice in the country was administered in exactly the same way by the Government. There was nothing left at all of the liberal institutions and reforms of Alexander II. The tribunals had lost their independence, and were docile tools in the hands of the Government. All cases in which members of the Government or of the Court were concerned were promptly quashed. Justice became a byword. Politics pure and simple controlled all the law courts and their decisions.

Monsieur Tcheglowitoff, the Minister of Justice, was without faith or creed. He had been my comrade in school days, and at school he was called "John Cain." After his graduation he posed as a Liberal, and Miliukoff, in 1905, wished to appoint him Minister of Justice in a Constitutional Cabinet.

At that time, seeing that the Liberal cause was lost, Tcheglowitoff became a pillar of the reactionary movement. A few months prior to the final outbreak, when he found himself attacked on all sides, he resigned as Minister of Justice, but the Emperor appointed him President of the Council of State—the highest official position in Russia. As President he concentrated all his attention on preventing any and all of the Liberal members of the Council from speaking.

His name was as much execrated by the masses as was that of Protopopoff, and when he was arrested after the revolution by the Provisional Government, the crowds, even to the children, spat on him as he was taken through the streets. He was taken to

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St. Peter and St. Paul's, and accused of high treason against the people of Russia.

The Russian clergy have ever played a most important part in the history of the nation. The masses are extremely religious, and in consequence the priests have very great influence over them. The church was always regarded with reverence, and was a power every sovereign relied upon for support. The assistance of the clergy was therefore cultivated. In the last years of the monarchy princes of the church were appointed from among those on whom the Court could rely, but as all these appointments were made through the influence of Rasputin, the appointees were naturally men of evil reputation, without any morality. Morality was replaced by a fawning servility. A monk who had been a friend of Rasputin's at Tobolsk, wholly ignorant and scarcely able to write his own name, was made an Archbishop, and *Pitirim*, well known for his depraved habits, was placed at the head of the Petrograd clergy as "The Metropolitan." The assistance of such characters was really of no earthly use to the Court, as the people, knowing their reputations and habits, would have nothing to do with them. As a result the church lost its influence. In the end Pitirim lost his position, became again a monk, and was imprisoned in a monastery situated in the far north of Russia.

In the army discontent with the *régime* of Nicholas II. had become general. At the beginning of the war the enthusiasm of the troops was undoubted. The first military reverses in East Prussia in no way dispirited the Army. They were fully offset by General Brussiloff's victories in Galicia, which were crowned by the taking of Lemberg and Przemyśl, the great Austrian fortress. Even when the Army suffered badly for want of munitions its morale kept up to a

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fine standard. Having no more cartridges, the men fought with stones and the butts of their rifles. But as time went by, and no munitions were supplied, the Army was forced to a permanent retreat. Even while Russian fortresses were falling one by one, and the Germans were overrunning more and more territory, the Army *still* had confidence in the future.

It was only when it learned of the treachery of the Minister of War, General Soukhomlinoff, and of his imprisonment, that discontent grew apace in all ranks. The officers especially did not attempt to hide their disgust. In the casinos and restaurants there was severe criticism on all sides against the Government. The Emperor himself was not spared, and no blame was too great for the Empress, because the military saw in her the chief cause of its disasters. The Imperial Guard was no exception to this bitter sentiment. I talked very often with officers of the First Regiments of the Guard, and they frankly told me that if the Emperor did not change his policy soon, if he did not replace the inefficient and traitorous ministers by a cabinet which would be responsible to the Duma, he would have to be dethroned and a regency instituted. These suggestions, and many similar ones, were known to the men of the rank and file, and the Emperor gradually lost not only their respect, but such little popularity as he had had.

But in the ranks the non-success of our armies was credited not only to the Emperor, but to the higher Russian command. Generals were accused of indolence and inefficiency, or servility to the Emperor, and the officers were accused of being the generals' accomplices. This sentiment explains the soldiers' fury against the generals and officers during the revolution, and why so many of them were massacred.

In the last months before the revolution, the lack

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of food supplies and of warm clothing fanned the flames. This was attributed, and not without reason, to the corruption of the departments which were supposed to supply the army with its requirements. Desertion became rife, despite the iron discipline which still existed in the ranks.

Thus from the political, judicial, clerical and military point of view things were going from bad to worse. Meanwhile society was divided into two camps. In the one camp no one cared anything about either the army or the war. They thought only of enriching themselves, and to them the slackness of the administration was of great assistance. The army contractors filled their pockets. Dealings on the stock market attained enormous and unprecedented figures, yet the nation was starving to death and the army lacked *everything*. A third of European Russia was held by the enemy, and still all values on the stock exchange rose steadily, thanks to the speculation that went on in high financial circles. Men who were penniless one day were millionaires the next! Bakery shops were repeatedly attacked by the hungry masses, whose long bread lines stretched for hundreds of yards in many parts of the city. And while this state of things existed the jewellers' establishments were worked harder than they ever had been before. One of these, the famous Faberge, told me that his profits had *trebled*. He added that the buyers were all unknown to him, and they cared nothing for the *quality* of the things they bought, insisting only on high prices. The theatres and café concerts were always crowded. Four and five hundred roubles were paid for a box at Red Cross entertainments. Wine was officially forbidden, but this did not prevent champagne from flowing in streams in private houses and in private dining-rooms, despite the fact that its price was ninety roubles per bottle.

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In this world of people gone absolutely pleasure mad, and literally drunk with money, Rasputin was everywhere, in the character of Principal Devil, for it was he who made it possible for these floods of money to get into the pockets of the vulturous crowds of pleasure-seeking leeches. The dangers of the situation were well known. The majority well knew they were dancing on the crumbling edges of a volcano; but so much the *more haste* was made to bleed suffering, starving, agonizing Russia to a still greater degree, and with the results enjoy life the more!

And it was on this class of people the ministers relied, and it was among *them* that the Government looked for salvation!

In the other camp of Society, which was the more numerous, the certainty of the great catastrophe's approach was well known, and also that the crisis could not be long delayed.

The Emperor was now openly criticized at street corners, and the Empress loudly cursed. I was with the Assistant Minister of Justice in his study one day; up to that time he had been looked upon as a reactionary. There were present two senators, one of whom had been chief of the police. Their conversation was such that had I closed my eyes I should have believed myself to be in the presence of three convinced out-and-out Revolutionaries!

Among the legal profession sentiment was even more bitter. Kerensky, who was a lawyer, hurried to the President of the Lawyers' Club one day very pale and, with tears in his eyes, asked him if some violent action had not better be taken in order to save the people and the army!

The members of the Duma met every day in party caucus. They were absolutely convinced that the state of things could not last any longer. But while

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the better-thinking element of Society limited itself to criticism, and tried to deliberate as to what was best to be done, the workmen were organizing. The Intellectuals lost ground in their endless deliberations, and the workmen became complete masters of the situation.

The press played only a very small part in the crisis. The Liberals had been muzzled. Those supporting the party of the Right, subsidized by the Government, had no readers, and in consequence no sales. Furthermore, Russia had no great journalists at the time. The Katkoffs, Aksakoffs, and the Souvorines had vanished, and no one to fill their illustrious places had been found.

The *Novoe Vremya* was run by the sons of the great Souvorine. One of them, of no use whatsoever, spent his time with women. The other, a man of talent, took to drink. Lacking in funds, the Souvorines sold a large part of their shares, which passed into the hands of a Jewish banker, Rubinstein by name. He had made a very large fortune, was an intimate of Rasputin's, and thus became quasi-editor-in-chief of the *Novoe Vremya* !

The other papers were colourless and weak, with the exception of the *Retch*, the organ of Miliukoff. But the military censorship, which had become a purely political affair, dependent on the desires of the Minister of the Interior, heavily blue-pencilled all articles intended for publication by the papers. Usually a blank space met the readers' eyes when they looked for an editorial. In revenge the papers made much of the complaints of the various parties, despite the efforts of the police, and this method of internal warfare spread to the people, and thence to the trenches, increasing the general distrust and discontent.

The President of the Duma, Rodzianko, on two occasions had tried to show the Emperor the dangers

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which menaced the nation, but his efforts were all in vain. Nicholas II., guided by Protopopoff, plunged on to the doom which grimly awaited him.

The peasants, who make up eighty-five per cent. of the population of Russia, thought differently to the workmen in the cities. Their living had never been so good as during the war! Three factors combined to enrich the country people :

(1) Each family having a soldier in the ranks received a certain sum of money each month.

(2) Produce was sold at very high prices, and

(3) As alcohol was forbidden, the earnings of the men of the family stayed *in* the family.

From these things it is true that among the peasants peace and content resulted. But also immorality rapidly increased. Many women thought of nothing but money, and almost always, the husband being away, his place was taken by a prisoner of war. This was often the case even in Society !

The peasant, however, finally made common cause with the revolution, because always the aspirations of the country people were for an increase in their holdings of land. The revolutionaries had inculcated in the peasant mind that these aspirations could only be satisfied *by a Revolution*, and gradually the creed of the peasants became : *Land and Liberty*.

When the Revolution broke out the peasants thought that their time had come. They seized the landlords' properties without waiting for any legal arrangement to be made by the Revolutionary Government ! Uneducated and savage, the peasants burned and destroyed secular property, tearing down libraries and ruining treasures which had been gathered little by little by their owners.

This movement and these actions, however, had nothing to do with socialistic theories. The peasant,



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who had become a landed proprietor since the days of Stolypin, does not rally to a doctrine which denies the rights of property ! Having received what they demanded, an increase of their territorial holdings, the Russian peasant will necessarily again become a conservative element. Already in the first months of the Revolution the peasant was very far from sharing the advanced ideas of the workmen in the cities.

The conditions and factors prevailing in Russia in the third year of the great war, which were the direct cause of the downfall of the monarchy, can be thus summarized :

An unpopular Emperor, lacking in will-power.

An Empress who was cordially detested.

The Grand Dukes and the Court suspected.

A discontented and deceived Army and Navy, which had lost all faith in their Generals, Admirals and Officers.

Venal and incapable Ministers.

Satraps in the position of Provincial Governors.

Administrative abuses which increased daily.

Justice all over the land reduced to a farce.

An unconsidered and despised Clergy.

A Society corrupt and rotten to the core.

The Duma and its Leaders lacking in courage and initiative.

The workmen won over by the Socialists.

The peasants, having lost all idea of morality, pillaging and destroying property.

Add to these the constant military disasters and the large part of Russia in the hands of the enemy, and you have an *exact* picture of unhappy Russia prior to the Revolution of February 25th, 1917.

Such was the drama and such were the principal actors in it.

The curtain is down ! the house silent and deserted !

## APPENDIX I

### QUEEN MARIE OF ROUMANIA

“ I WILL sooner abdicate than recognize a peace shameful to my country,” cried the Queen of Roumania on learning the terrible peace conditions dictated by the Emperor William and his partner Austria, and imposed on the poor little Danubian Kingdom, crushed by superior force after an heroic resistance.

The Sovereign reveals herself in her cry of indignation, straight from the heart. In these moments of anguish she shows herself as she is—noble and proud, worthy of her people, and worthy niece of two great sovereigns, Edward VII. of England and Alexander III. of Russia.

It will be remembered that Queen Marie is the daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh, brother of Edward VII., and of the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia, only sister of the Emperor Alexander III.

“ I belong to a truly international family,” said the Queen to me one day, referring to the fact that her father was English, her mother Russian, and of her sisters, one was married to a Russian, the Grand Duke Cyril, the second to a German, the Prince of Hohenlohe Lauenburg, and the third to a prince of Spain.

My first opportunity of getting to know the Queen of Roumania was when she was a princess of England, towards the end of the year 1892, in Munich. I was Second Secretary of the Russian Legation in that city.

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The Countess Osten-Sacken, the wife of my chief, was an intimate friend of the Grand Duchess Marie, mother of the future Queen of Roumania. This lady confided to her all the difficulties she had with regard to the approaching marriage of her daughter.

"Imagine," she said, "Marie has got two suitors at the same time, both desperately in love with her, the Grand Duke George of Russia and Prince Ferdinand of Roumania; the former is here, and Ferdinand is expected in a few days. I don't know what to do. It seems to me that my daughter prefers the Roumanian, but it hurts her very much to disappoint the Grand Duke. She is so kind-hearted!"

However, the Princess made light of her mother's difficulties and decided matters for herself. In January, 1893, she married the heir to the throne of Roumania.

Endowed with exceptional beauty, only equalled by the goodness of her heart, she became at once the idol of her people. Her personality captivated every one. The highest and lowest were equally amenable to her great charm. Her uncle, King Charles of Roumania, compared her to a ray of sunlight, notwithstanding his pronounced sympathies for Germany, which were so opposed to those of his niece.

In June, 1914, I again met the Princess Marie. She was still the Princess, and was present for the meeting between King Charles of Roumania and the Czar, at Constanza. Wherever she appeared, driving, riding, or walking, beautiful as the day, gay, smiling and waving her handkerchief in response to the cheers of the people, the enthusiasm of the crowd for their Princess was immense.

The Princess little dreamt of the terrible trials which awaited her in the ensuing three years.

I was once more in Roumania, in Bucharest, in the summer of 1916, about two months before the declara-

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tion of war by Roumania. The country was then divided into three political parties. The first, led by Carp, former minister of King Charles, favoured an alliance with the Central Powers. This party was supported chiefly by conservatives. Although some of these supported Mr. Marghiloman, who was in favour of neutrality, the second party had for its leader Philippesco, Take Ionescu and Michel Cantacuzene, who insisted on an immediate entry into the war on the side of the Allies. The third party, and the most powerful, had for its chief M. Bratiano, who was then President of the Council. He led a double game, emphasizing his sympathy for the Allies and at the same time concluding a commercial treaty with Germany and Austria-Hungary.

As to the King, he hesitated. His origin, all his youthful sympathies, drew him towards Germany, but he decided to remain a really constitutional monarch to the end. He made up his mind only to follow the wishes of the majority of his people. Looking back on all that I saw, it seems to me that Ferdinand saw clearly how he would have to drink the cup with its dregs one day, but all that he wished was to postpone the evil hour as long as possible. This will explain the entire and unwavering support he gave to Bratiano's policy.

But from the beginning of the crisis, Queen Marie did not hide her sympathies. At one moment during this, my last stay in Bucharest, when the conclusion of the commercial treaty with the Central Powers seemed almost certain, old Philippesco said to me, "Luckily we have our dear Queen with us, and with such a faithful ally I have no fear for the future."

One day the Princess Cantacuzene, wife of one of the warmest partisans of the Allies, and intimate friend of Queen Marie, invited my wife and myself to pass the evening with her and the Queen. Unfortunately

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I was absent, called away to Reni, on the Danube, by Admiral Vesselkine, commander of our flotilla, and my wife was alone able to take advantage of the Princess's amiable invitation.

The Queen was accompanied by her daughter, the Princess Elizabeth. A large part of the evening was devoted by the Sovereign herself to reading aloud a small book of hers entitled "The Heart of the Roumanian Peasant." This little work was written in English, this and the Roumanian language being preferred by the Queen. Her very soul is revealed by this little essay. It illustrates her passionate love for her people and her pride in being their Queen. Happy in her great and rightly deserved popularity, she boasts how on frequent occasions she has had to accept the responsibility of figuring as godmother to so many children of humble peasants. She describes their cottages, and waxes enthusiastic over the sterling qualities of the parents of the newly-born.

In the short preface, the Queen says, "The object of this little work is to make Roumania as much admired by my readers as she is loved by me." Always and everywhere her strongest feelings are a real devotion to the country of her adoption.

Naturally, immediately on my return to Bucharest, I deemed it my privilege to ask for an audience, which a few days later was accorded me. Roumania had then declared war. When the Queen received my wife and myself in her palace at Bucharest, it was already completely transformed into a hospital. Her Majesty, beautiful and charming as ever, wore the dress of the hospital nurse. After the usual exchange of greetings and courtesies, the Sovereign passed on to the questions of the moment, speaking directly of the war and the council of Ministers which under the presidency of the King had decided on its declaration.

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"I know what anxious moments the King must have passed," she said to me. "And I have a right to be proud of his decision." Her Majesty added, "I assure you that I have no hatred for the Germans—my mother and my sister are in Germany—but I felt that the fate of my country depended on an alliance with the enemies of Germany and Austria. The Germans evidently know the part I have played, for they do everything possible to eliminate me. Their aeroplanes pursue me night after night, and I am obliged continually to change my abode. But all this leaves me perfectly calm, and every day I say to myself, 'What a blessing to be Queen at such a moment!'"

She did not seem to have any doubts about final success, although she fully recognized the difficulties the Roumanians would have to overcome. "They are very strong," she said again and again, in speaking of the Central Powers.

In bidding her adieu, I asked for a copy of the little book which she had read at the *soirée* of Countess Cantacuzene. The Queen graciously acceded to my request, and the following day I received the little volume, accompanied by her portrait, and signed by her. I remained another week in Bucharest, which by then had become a real hell.

The Germans and the Bulgarians commenced a bombardment of the poor "Balkan Paris" the day after the declaration of war. It was a Sunday. The streets were full of people enjoying the lovely weather when the first hostile aeroplane appeared. The public thought it was manœuvres of the Roumanian aviators. Half an hour later the ambulances of the Red Cross destroyed these illusions. The Huns and their Allies chose for their mark the most frequented squares and places. Bucharest was more tried and more punished than almost any other town that suffered an aerial bombard-

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ment. In this first hour there were three hundred and seventy-five dead and wounded, the great majority being women and children. Whole districts of the city, only a few weeks ago devoted to pleasure, were completely destroyed. I saw with my own eyes one poor mother quite out of her mind. Her four children had been crushed to death! But the Germans and the Bulgarians did not confine themselves to this mode of destruction. In addition they dropped bombs containing packages of poisoned candies. The chemist (Professor Cantacouzène) who made an analysis told me that these bon-bons were filled with diphtheria microbes and typhus germs. Placards were immediately posted in the streets warning the people of this unsuspected danger. Unfortunately, it was too late. Numbers of children were already victims of an enemy devoid of human sentiment.

Imagine what terrible moments the poor Queen must have passed. How she must have suffered, she, so full of motherly tenderness. But she continued bravely to do her duty as Sovereign. Later at Jassy she shared all the privations endured by the remnants of the army and the crowds of fugitives. She refused the offer of the Czar, who put at her disposal a palace at Odessa or one at Kiev. "I will not abandon my people in distress," invariably was her answer.

She struggled to the end, encouraging the King to resist and continuing her work of benevolence. When at last the King, giving way to the advice of his Ministers, declared himself ready to sign a treaty of peace, the Queen revolted against his decision. "Rather abdicate," she cried, with her British pride. This cry of indignation has immortalized her.

The name of Queen Marie of Roumania will figure in all history as that of a real Queen and Patriot.

## APPENDIX II

### THE RESULT OF ROUMANIA'S PARTICIPATIONS IN THE GREAT WAR

Bucharest, Sept. 15th, 1916.

Confidential Report of E. De Schelking, Correspondent of *Journal de La Bourse* of Petrograd, and formerly Secretary of the Russian Embassy in Berlin. Transmitted to Generals Alexiev and Brussiloff and submitted to the Czar, Nicholas II.

UPON my departure from Roumania after a sojourn of three months, I consider it necessary to sum up my impressions.

There are two main considerations which I would bring to your notice :

(1) What was the practical value to Russia and the Allies of Roumania's participation in the war ?

(2) Did that value come up to the expectations of Russia, considering the price paid for same ?

Unhappily, on examining the situation in detail, I am forced to the conclusion that Roumania's help was not of real advantage to Russia, and that the price paid for same was too high.

Our political understanding with Roumania arranged for an adjustment of boundaries which would have doubled her territory. Besides having promised her the acquisition of Transylvania, which is inhabited by



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a very large number of Roumanians, we promised Roumania Bukowina, including the capital, Czernowitz, which was twice drenched with Russian blood during the war, and also the Banat, including Torondal, the population of which was exclusively Serbian. Thus in our desire to secure Roumania's co-operation, we sacrificed our blood-brothers, the heroic Serbians.

At the same time, we gave rise to new complications between two Balkan states, Roumania and Serbia, because the Serbians could never be satisfied with a situation which placed Serbia under the menace of Roumanian guns at Torondal, instead of those of Austria at Semlin. Such an understanding was contrary, in my opinion, to the interests of Roumania herself, because the vital interests of Roumania were, under any circumstances, linked with those of Serbia, if only it were to give her an outlet to the Adriatic by a complete understanding with Serbia. I know positively that the arrangements for the cession of Torondal created a most painful impression in the political circles of Serbia. In her intense desire to help the Allies, Serbia not only showed herself willing to sacrifice part of Dalmatia to Italy, but had also consented to give up a portion of Macedonia to Bulgaria. This last arrangement, as we know, was part of a secret treaty made with Britain, France, Russia and Italy, to which N. Paschitch, the Serbian Premier, gave a broken-hearted consent under Russian pressure. The Serbian government realized to the full the immense value of Italy's participation in the war and the continued neutrality of Bulgaria, if these could be secured by such sacrifices.

So far as Roumania is concerned, Serbian statesmen knew perfectly well the military position of Roumania and realized that the cession of the Banat and the entire Roumanian demands were not in accordance with the practical interests of the Allies. In my opinion

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our great amiability towards Roumania was entirely due to the fact that all the diplomatic representatives of the Allies in Roumania except Italy were not *au courant* with the true situation. They had at heart nothing but the advancement of their personal careers and they blindly followed the lead of M. Bratiano, the premier of Roumania. Their sole object was the participation of Roumania in the war, regardless of consequences.

The former French minister, M. Blondel, knew perfectly well that his diplomatic days were numbered, but he hoped that he would retain his position if he were able to bring about the participation of Roumania in the war. The Russian representative, Chamberlain Poklevsky-Kosiell, found himself in the same position. For over a year his recall had been decided upon, and he had only retained his post through the direct support of M. S. D. Sazonoff, the Russian Foreign Minister. He realized that his feet were not on firm ground, and that if he were to preserve his position he must accomplish something spectacular. The British minister, Sir F. Barclay, was not taken very seriously in Bucharest. He was very intimate with Poklevsky-Kosiell in Persia, and in Roumania he was inclined to always follow the Russian's lead.

These three diplomats naturally were used by Bratiano. Whatever concerned the prime minister's official position and also that of the ministry of war, which he occupied, was not deemed a matter of concern to others. Bratiano would not brook any criticism or contradiction, or even suggestions from outside sources. He had named as vice-minister of war his nephew, General Iliescu, whose incapacity in all that concerned military affairs was notorious. Iliescu, to flatter the vanity of Bratiano, assured the prime minister that the forces at the disposal of Roumania

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were very much bigger than they were in reality. In his desire to be master of the situation in Roumania, Bratiano worked to crush all opposition, and to this end inveigled the Allies' diplomats into supporting him. Our real friends, for example, Messieurs Philippesco, Take Ionescu and Michel Cantacuzene, found themselves paralysed by the Russian understanding with Roumania in 1914. For by that understanding we had made very serious concessions to Roumania, not for her participation in the war, but only for her neutrality. *L'amour-propre* of the Roumanian deputies had been flattered by this understanding and the opposition lost ground, and Bratiano was consequently completely master of the situation.

But if the political understanding between Roumania and the Allies was bad, the military arrangements were even worse. It is surely clear that the principal front, not only for Roumania, but especially for Russia, was the southern or Bulgarian front. During the two years of her neutrality the Roumanian people were principally occupied with making money. They had been able to sell all their produce to Germany, Bulgaria, Austria and Turkey. The result was that there was no beef to be obtained in Roumania even before the war started. In July, 1916, there were already three beefless days a week, and in September there were four, and it is certain that in a short time there will be no more beef in the country. There is also no coal. Hotels and other public places in all the larger cities could get no coal in September. It must be presumed that Bratiano allowed the export of all these products in exchange for war materials from Germany and Austria. At least, in making a new commercial treaty with Germany and Austria and being asked by the Allies the reason for such a treaty, he made this his excuse and explanation.

For the defence of the southern front only four

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divisions were allowed, and of these four one line division, the ninth, was at Turtukai and the three others were only mobilized just before war was declared. Russia sent into the Dobrudja two and a half divisions, which were comprised chiefly of Serbian forces which had taken refuge in Roumania after the advance of Mackensen on the north and Bulgaria on the east had cut them off from their own main armies. From Roumania they had been sent to Odessa, and were there equipped by the Russians. These forces were under the command of Lieutenant-General Zaiontchkowsky, and were not nearly strong enough. But Bratiano with extreme fatuity had declared that Roumania was sufficiently strong for all purposes. At the same time he asked Russia to supply him with half a million men. The Russian government pointed out that if such large forces were supplied it was impossible for Roumania to acquire so much territory, and that in consequence the treaty would have to be revised and the Banat at least restored to Serbia. Bratiano thereupon rejoined that Roumania was sufficiently strong. His one idea was to secure the territories he had set his heart upon.

Moreover, Bratiano declared over and over again that he was absolutely certain Bulgaria would remain on the defensive and be unable to attack. He was strongly supported by the Russian military attaché at Bucharest, a colonel of the general staff, by name Tatarinoff, who before he was appointed to Bucharest had been military attaché at Sofia and in consequence must have been fully informed as to the forces and military intentions of Bulgaria.

The result of these blunders were very soon apparent. Two days after war was declared Bulgarian, Turkish and German forces under Mackensen attacked the ninth division at Turtukai and annihilated it. Thus in two

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days Roumania lost twenty thousand men of the best troops on the Dobrudja front.

After this victory Mackensen rapidly marched against Zaiontchkowsky, who was thus placed in a very difficult position. The Roumanian division which was attached to his army was not of the best material, despite the assurances of Colonel Tatarinoff to the contrary. Not only regiments but whole brigades broke and ran directly the Turkish shrapnel ranged them, thus exposing Zaiontchkowsky's right wing and forcing him to change his front and retire. For confirmation of this it is only necessary to refer to Zaiontchkowsky's report to the Russian general staff.

I cannot prophesy as to the future, but at this moment it is plain that the whole responsibility now rests on Russia, and in Bucharest people are already crying that they have been betrayed by Russia, knowing, of course, nothing of our military convention concluded with Bratiano.

Yesterday I had an interview with Colonel Tatarinoff, and I cannot hide my astonishment of the manner in which he spoke. He stated that it was necessary for Roumania to start the war, and "thank God it had been accomplished." Hitherto he had stated that two and a half divisions from Russia would be enough, and yet now he stated to me that Bulgaria had a first-class army of 550,000 men and Roumania could do nothing against such an army. He said that to ensure the defeat of Bulgaria it would be necessary to obtain from Russia an army of 500,000 men at least, and no such army under present conditions was available. Therefore it will be necessary to make a small local attack and at the first success propose terms of peace to Bulgaria. But he added that at the same time it would be possible to dethrone Czar Ferdinand of Bulgaria. When I replied to him that such things were quite impossible, because

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of our arrangements with both Serbia and Roumania, he replied that he was very sorry, but he saw no other way out of the muddle.

Meanwhile our minister Poklevsky appeared very well satisfied with the way things were going, although his whole conception of the situation was dictated by Bratiano. For example, when I pointed out to Poklevsky that the Roumanian government was not living up to our agreement (which included the provisioning of our troops, the proper supplies for the Red Cross and adequate transportation . . . we had been promised twelve trains a day and only two had materialized), and suggested that if the Roumanian government could not live up to its agreement the military and political agreements might be changed to our mutual advantage, he replied :

“ I am very sorry. The convention was signed not only by Russia but by Britain, France and Italy, and is obligatory upon Allies, and we cannot place Bratiano in a difficult position by suggesting such changes now as might affect his political position with the Roumanian people and thus destroy confidence.”

It is thus plain that the Allies had concluded it was absolutely necessary to support Bratiano at all costs.

At this time Bratiano completely lost his head. The former French minister, Monsieur Blondel, whose daughter was married to the Roumanian governor of Silistria and who lived in Bucharest, told me that Bratiano had entirely lost his self-confidence. In conversation with him Bratiano had declared that the Allies had persuaded him against his better judgment to enter the war, and that therefore they were to blame for the situation. Monsieur Blondel replied that this was by no means the case. The Allies had never pushed matters, but had allowed Roumania to choose her own time and had concluded with Bratiano himself all the

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arrangements he had desired and had been assured by him that the Roumanian army was fully prepared to carry out the conventions and was in a very strong position.

Fearing the criticism of the opposition, Bratiano attempted to form a coalition government, and offered to take into the cabinet M. Take Ionescu, Michel Cantacuzene and Stelian, but refused to give them any responsible portfolios, and in consequence these statesmen refused to enter the government. The question of the change of government was placed before the chamber of deputies during the next two weeks.

To summarize :

1. Our political understanding with Roumania gave too much to the Danubian Kingdom and we received from Bratiano far too little support, and this political understanding was not in the interests of the Roumanians themselves . . . (as, for instance, the question of Torondal).

2. The military convention was based on a false principle in not making the main front to the south but to the north on the Transylvania front. At this moment this assertion is proved by the fact that the convention is being automatically changed. The Roumanians are sending troops from the northern front to Dobrudja and we have to reinforce this front also.

3. The Allies had not taken into proper consideration the military strength of Bulgaria nor its strategic plans. Bulgaria was more or less ignored, and the blame for this state of affairs must be placed on the shoulders of the Russian attaché at Bucharest, Colonel Tatarinoff.

The right thing to do was for the Allies to dispatch large Russian forces through the Dobrudja towards Sofia and co-operate with General Sarraïl at Salonika. By this means the Allies would have been able to handle the Grecian situation, dethrone King Constantine,

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and joining forces with the Russians and Greeks, have crushed Bulgaria and eliminated her from the war.

If this cannot be done it is possible to support Roumania for a considerable period, but eventually disaster is assured and Roumania will be totally defeated.

(At the time this report was presented the Roumanians appeared to be victorious in Transylvania and had not yet been defeated beyond the Rothen Thurm pass and driven back into Roumania by von Falkenhayn.)

THE END



